



New Year's Resolutions for Kids

Are you one of the many adults who make New Year's resolutions each December/January? Even if you're not, it's never too late – or too early – to start! Think about helping your kids, even your preschoolers and elementary schoolers, develop a few resolutions of their own. Here are a few tips for talking to your children about resolutions and some sample resolutions from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

1. What is a New Year's Resolution?

A resolution is a promise. It is a promise that you make to yourself! It is a tradition for people to make resolutions at the beginning of a new year.

2. Talk about Types of Resolutions

One sort of resolution has to do only with oneself—eating less candy, exercising more, reading more, watching less TV, etc. Other resolutions might involve family or friends—being more patient with a sibling, being more helpful to parents, trying not to fight with friends, etc. Some resolutions are about school and the outside world— getting to class on time, trying for better grades, focusing more during soccer practice, etc.

3. Choose a Resolution

When choosing a resolution, encourage your children to choose something that is important to them. It should not be based on others' expectations of them.

4. Keep It Simple

Children are more likely to find success if their resolutions are simple and concise.

5. Remember, "All Things in Moderation"

More is not necessarily better. Encourage your children to be realistic and only have one or two resolutions.

6. Think About the Big Picture

Setting resolutions with children helps them learn about goal-setting. Once your children decide upon their resolution, discuss how they are going to achieve it and keep themselves motivated.

7. Encourage Progress

Set up your children to succeed, and encourage the process and their progress. However, if they do not make progress, do not consider it a failure. Remember, this should be a fun "project" of sorts — not a chore.

8. Possible Resolutions for Preschoolers

- I will clean up my toys and put them where they belong.
- I will brush my teeth twice a day, and wash my hands after going to the bathroom and before eating.
- I won't tease dogs or other pets – even friendly ones. I will avoid being bitten by keeping my fingers and face away from their mouths.

9. Possible Resolutions for Children Ages 5-12

- I will drink 2% milk and water three times each day, and limit soda and fruit drinks to once each day.
- I will apply sunscreen before I go outdoors on bright sunny days. I will try to stay in the shade whenever possible and wear a hat and sunglasses, especially when I'm playing sports.
- I will try to find a sport (like basketball or soccer) or an activity (like playing tag, jumping rope, dancing or riding my bike) that I like and do it at least three times a week!
- I will always wear a helmet when bicycling.
- I will wear my seat belt every time I get in a car. I'll sit in the back seat and use a booster seat until I am tall enough to use a lap/shoulder seat belt.
- I'll be nice to other kids. I'll be friendly to kids who need friends – like someone who is shy, or is new to my school.
- I'll never give out personal information such as my name, home address, school name or telephone number on the Internet. Also, I'll never send a picture of myself to someone I chat with on the computer without my parent's permission.

10. Possible Resolutions for Children Ages 13 and Up

- I will eat at least one fruit and one vegetable every day, and I will limit the amount of soda I drink to one glass daily.
- I will take care of my body through physical activity and nutrition.
- I will choose non-violent television shows and video games, and I will spend only one to two hours each day – at the most – on these activities.
- I will help out in my community – through volunteering, working with community groups or by joining a group that helps people in need.
- When I feel angry or stressed out, I will take a break and find constructive ways to deal with the stress, such as exercising, reading, writing in a journal or discussing my problem with a parent or friend.
- When faced with a difficult decision, I will talk about my choices with an adult whom I can trust.
- When I notice my friends are struggling or engaging in risky behaviors, I will talk with a trusted adult and attempt to find a way that I can help them.
- I will be careful about whom I choose to date, and always treat the other person with respect and without coercion or violence. I will expect the same good behavior in return.
- I will resist peer pressure to try drugs and alcohol.
- I agree not to use a cell phone or text message while driving and to always use a seat belt.

Sample resolutions from the American Academy of Pediatrics' 21 Healthy New Year's Resolutions for Kids (December 2010). Available: <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/jankidstips.cfm>