

MAKING RESPONSIBLE DECISIONS

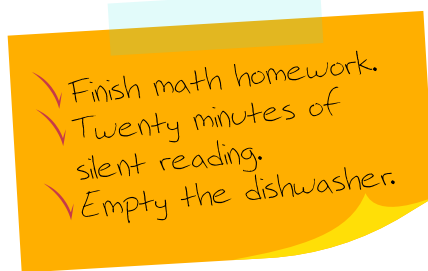
END-OF-DAY/END-OF-WEEK ROUTINES

Do we begin and end each day with a sense of purpose? Did we meet our goals? What goals do we have tomorrow? Are we basing our decisions on such ideas? That's what it means to "make responsible decisions," and this is a skill students need to practice over and over again before we can expect it to stick.

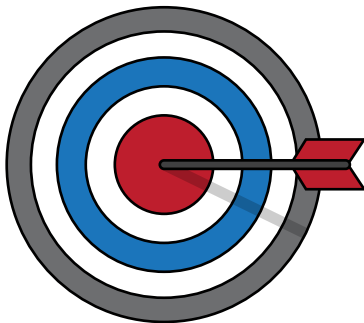
To-Do Lists

Consider, as a family, having a to-do list to accomplish each evening. These lists do not need to be complicated or lengthy, but there are a couple of things we need our children to accomplish each day — some related to school and others to family life.

A simple list might include a few easy items:



We can set these goals for our students after school and then before bed, we can review if we finished them — and if we did not complete all our items, we could talk about why. Is the dishwasher full because the child played too many video games? Did they only get through 10 minutes of silent reading because of texting on the phone?



It is just as important to know why we failed to meet our goals to accomplish them. When we reflect on why we miss a goal, we can think about making better decisions tomorrow. This is one way to promote the skill of responsible decision-making.

So, instead of getting upset about the dishes or demanding they be done at a specific time, consider turning failures into opportunities to reflect and plan how to do better moving forward.

Our plans do not always need to focus on schoolwork and chores. Maybe a child wants to spend time in the evening playing with a friend. We can plan for that, too! To have playtime, we can explore what decisions we need to make ahead of time — such as finishing math homework. Either way, when we set goals and reflect on why we did or did not accomplish them, we can use those reflections to consider our decision-making process. Instead of only doing what we want in the immediate moment, children need to learn how to plan for getting what they want while also meeting their responsibilities. Establishing routines similar to those listed above — at the end of the day, week, or both — can help us as caregivers to carve out space for having these kinds of conversations.

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