

ideas for parents

Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

FAST FACTS

ASSET #32: Planning and Decision Making

Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when they know how to plan ahead and make choices.

30%

of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.*

What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed. "Planning and decision making" is one of five social-competencies assets.

* Based on Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999-2000 school year.

Putting Planning into Action

Six-year-old Tommy Tighe had a dream:

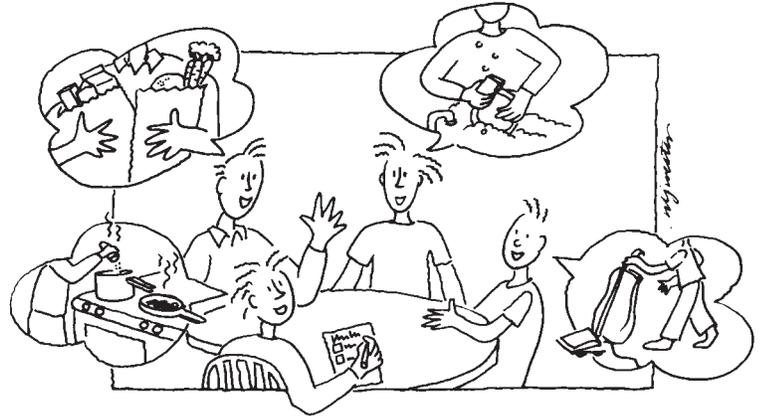
He wanted to create world peace. "Ever since I was four, I had a vision that I could cause peace in the world," he said. "I wanted to make a bumper sticker that says, 'PEACE, PLEASE! DO IT FOR US KIDS,' signed Tommy."

So he developed this plan:

1. Call about the cost of printing bumper stickers.
2. Make a plan for a loan so that the printer can get paid.
3. Have bumper stickers printed.
4. Figure out how to tell people about the bumper stickers.
5. Get addresses of world leaders.
6. Write a letter to all of the presidents and leaders of other countries and send them each a free bumper sticker.
7. Talk to everyone about peace.
8. Call the newspaper and tell them about my business.
9. Arrange for a talk at my school.

Once he decided the plan was a good one, he acted on it. Soon Tommy had a picture of Mikhail Gorbachev, former president of the former Soviet Union, that included his autograph saying, "Go for peace, Tommy." Tommy also sold a bumper sticker to former U.S. president Ronald Reagan.

He has since sold more than 2,500 of his bumper stickers and repaid his \$454 loan. Not only has he done well, his story appears in the best-selling book *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, and he also appeared on *The Joan Rivers Show*.



When Joan Rivers asked if his bumper stickers really made a difference, he replied, "So far I've had it out two years and got the Berlin Wall down. I'm doing pretty good, don't you think?"

time together

Three ways to strengthen your child's planning and decision-making skills:

1. When your child receives long-term assignments, offer to help her or him plan and make decisions in order to finish them on time.
2. When making family decisions, use careful thought. Make a list of pros and cons with your child.
3. Give your teenager full responsibility for cooking a family meal once a month. Give your younger child specific tasks in meal preparation.

Who Plans? Who Decides?

Write the names of family members who plan, decide, and do each of the following:

	Who plans?	Who decides?	Who does?
Family relaxation activities			
Meals			
Holiday celebrations			
Household chores			
Extracurricular activities			

Who does most of the planning, decision making, and follow-through?
How can all family members be included in all areas?

Helpful Hints

Tips that build planning and decision-making skills in your child:

- **Encourage a daily to-do list. Checking off items can be satisfying.**
- **Allow room for mistakes, but don't rescue your child from the consequences.**
- **Remember that when children know how to plan, they're more apt to make their dreams come true.**
- **Celebrate your child's progress and accomplishments in decision making and planning.**

Quick Tip:

Help your child set realistic goals. Then make a plan to reach them.

talk together

Questions to discuss with your child:

- *What steps do you go through before making a decision?*
- *How do you feel about your planning skills? How can we support and improve them?*
- *Which decisions are you currently struggling with? What plans do you need to make?*

More Help for Parents

The Life-Smart Kid: Teaching Your Child to Use Good Judgment in Every Situation by Lawrence J. Greene. This book provides practical ways to help young people develop decision-making skills. (Published by Prima Publishing.)

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“If you deliberately plan on being less than you are capable of being, then I warn you that you'll be unhappy for the rest of your life.”

— Abraham Maslow

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Healthy Communities Healthy Youth, Old Saybrook is part of the Search Institute's national Healthy Communities Healthy Youth network.

Our local initiative has opportunities for anyone interested in joining our effort to increase the number of developmental assets for ALL Old Saybrook youth.

For more information contact HCHY Coordinator Wendy Mill at Youth and Family Services, 860-510-5050 or via email at wmill@town.old-saybrook.ct.us.