

Identifying Your Long-term Goals

Now more than ever, our days are filled with trying to meet our short-term goals – trying to get children to focus on their schoolwork, to get children to keep themselves busy, to get teenagers to stay indoors. It's easy in this challenging time to lose sight of our long-term parenting goals.

When that happens, we can easily resort to shouting, hitting and punishing. Those reactions however can easily make a stressful situation worse and scare or hurt your child. When you feel your tension rising, it's a signal to self-regulate so you can refocus on your *long-term* goals.

Why is this important? Well, think of it this way: Imagine that you're guiding your child along a pathway. If you focus on their feet, all you can see is the step they're taking *right now*. It's hard to guide them because you can't see where they're going.



But if you look up, you can see where your child is going. You can guide them on their journey more easily because you can see the big picture.

Focusing only on the child's behaviour is like focusing only on the child's feet. We can't see the big picture. We lose sight of where the child is headed. The foundation of positive discipline is to look up so you can see your child's destination. Here's a way to start:

Imagine your child as a grown up and ask yourself:

- What kind of person do I hope they will be?
- What kind of relationship do I hope to have with them?

Like parents around the world, you likely hope that your children will:

- be resilient and able to manage stress
- be good problem solvers who can resolve conflict without hurting anyone
- trust you and come to you with their problems
- feel confident and secure; happy and optimistic
- have strong relationships with you throughout their lives



As families, we're having lots of short-term challenges right now, but if we can stay focused, we can turn these challenges into opportunities to work toward our long-term goals. We can show our children how to manage stress and solve problems without hurting others; build their trust, confidence and optimism; and strengthen our relationships.

In this way, we can guide our children to their destination and help everyone come out of this challenging time stronger and more resilient.