



# Auditing and evaluating your child's play

January is the typical time to be reflective and make plans for the New Year. Before the end of January we've forgotten them or realized this is just not going to work. Plans and goal setting is easily done ANYTIME of the year.

I'm a big fan of Dave Ramsey's envelope system and he along with others shares the best way to effectively set & achieve goals.

1. **Be specific.**

When setting goals, be specific in what you want to achieve. Vagueness will only cause you to feel overwhelmed, and you will just give up.

2. **Make your goals measureable.**

In order to know if you achieved the goal, it must be measurable. For example, if you want to lose weight, don't simply write down "lose weight" as a goal. How much weight do you want to lose? Or don't just write "spend more time with family." How much time do you want to spend with your family every night?

3. **Are they your goals?**

Only you can set your own goals. If your spouse, co-worker or friend sets a goal for you, you're not going to achieve it. Taking ownership will give you more incentive to meet your goal.

4. **Set a time limit.**

Setting a time frame will help you set realistic goals. For example, if you want to save more money, list how much money a month you want to put into your savings account.

5. **Put them in writing.**

Putting your goals in writing will make you much more likely to achieve them. Write down your goals and review them often. This will give you motivation to make them a reality.

This is the process to succeed. **Successful people reassess their lives and then start living intentionally, in writing, on paper, on purpose.** Make your resolutions a reality in this year!

Source: [The Keys To Achieving Your Goals in 2010](#)

Let's get started on the play evaluation so that this year you reach the goals you want for your children.

**\*\*Feel free to print for your own personal use or forward to friends. \*\***

Best wishes and playful times,

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## Looking back and planning

This is the time of year we reflect on what's gone on before and make plans for the future. We audit our lives. Whilst you're there making plans for a great 09 consider including a **play audit** for your children.

- What type of play did you encourage? Should you encourage?
- What opportunities did they have for

a) creative play?

b) outdoor play?

c) unstructured play?

d) unplugged play?

- What did we love doing together?
- What do we want to do more of?
- What didn't work well for our family?
- Are there activities I want to try?
- How's our family balance of activities?
- Are they doing age appropriate activities?

After your audit **what's your plan?**

1. Share your ideas with others, discuss and come up with a plan.
2. Where will you put your resolution?
3. Tweet about it, journal it?
4. Whatever you decide whether to go public or stay private with your resolutions celebrate all the great things you have done and look to the potential of what you can try to do.

## Looking forward and planning

January is a time for reflection and goal setting. All across the country people are thinking of goals for 2010. One overlooked area in goal setting and planning is often, *"What play will we encourage this year?"*

I don't think many of us give much thought to our childrens' play habits. We're very tuned in to what food we put in front of our children and what they see, listen and participate in. We know that the tub of blueberries is a good choice for them, but if they don't or won't eat it we evaluate that it's too expensive to keep buying blueberries, only to have them thrown away. We might try a kiwi instead and find that they like the furry skin. We then become kiwi eaters. Can we say the same about play?

The way we play has changed in many ways since you and I were children. There are more toys, and for the better. With more toys there are many more choices and more chances to get it wrong. What a responsibility!

The millions of dollars spent on packaging and marketing toys makes it hard to really difficult to determine if the toy is actually a good choice for my child. The fact that many toy manufactures now give out advice about how to play can further complicate matters. Doctors and early childhood experts are featured on panels designed to help guide us. Who do I listen to? Dr X on the back of the toy packet? Professor Y who writes books, my friend Tara who's a research assistant with a play foundation, my aunt who swears by Lincoln Logs? With so many choices, it is easy to end up with rooms full of toys and not know why you bought some of them, or even why do you keep them?

So, how do you go about evaluating your child's play?

## What's next?

1. Complete the audit
2. Reflect on your successes. We all have them.
3. Identify something you wish to work on.
4. Define it using the steps 1-5 in the introduction.
5. Limit your play goals. You are likely to find many things you'd like to work on but choose wisely. You can't do it all right now.
6. Start **today!**

The last step is often overlooked. **Be accountable.** If other people know your goals then they can ask you how you're doing, celebrate and chivvy you along when you need it.

I would love to help you be more accountable. Feel free to [email your goals and steps](#) to me. If you're happy for public accountability then comment in our [community](#).

Look forward to hearing from you.

*For more ideas on how to ramp up your play today with your child.*

Go to [Play Activities](#) for the weekly newsletter of play activities and ideas for the under 5 child.

[Play Activities Blog](#) for articles, activities and chit chat about play.

[Raising Playful Tots](#) for the weekly Internet radio show podcast of interviews with likeminded play people who share that play is important to the under 5s.

[Treasure Basket Play](#) for beginner play ideas for the under 12 months little ones.