

# Preschoolers Should Make Resolutions Too

By Jen Lahn, M.S.W., director of the Jewish Preschool on Sardis  
It's that time of year again...time for making those New Year's resolutions. But setting goals shouldn't just be for adults.

Encouraging your preschooler to reach for some specific accomplishments is a great way to help them on their journey toward independence. Even though preschoolers

might not be able to read or write, you can jot down the goals and add pictures next to the words so your child can "read" along with you as you review them. Be sure to have fun and let your child know that reaching these goals is all part of becoming a "big kid." You can even add some adult goals as you go along. Here are a few goals to try:

**Goal #1: Toddler:** *I will clean up my toys after I play.*

**Parent:** *I will enable my child to participate in the clean-up process.*

Toddlers are very quick and quite adept at taking out their toys—and leaving them scattered all over the playroom. As parents, we often "give in" when it comes to cleaning up because it's easier and faster to it ourselves. That may be true now, but what about years down the road when you have an older child who never developed their "cleaning up trait"? You want to set the habit now. Take part in the clean up process with your child. Make a game out of it and work on some developmental skills at the same time. For instance, practice color recognition and following multi-step directions by putting away all

of the orange toys first, then blue and so on. You can sort by finding all of the square blocks, rectangles, triangles, etc.

**Goal #2: Toddler:** *I will learn to get myself dressed.*

**Parent:** *I will give my child opportunities to practice his self help skills and independence.*

Preschoolers are able to put on their underwear, and pull on their shirts and pants. Many are able to pull on socks and slip on their shoes. By allowing them to do this, you foster independence and are "telling" them that you support them and believe they are capable. Be sure to leave enough time and to involve them in the clothing selection process. You may even want to make the selection the night before to help the morning go more smoothly.

**Goal #3: Toddler:** *I will be nice to my friends and animals.*

**Parent:** *I will be more specific when redirecting my children.*

Being a good friend and playing nicely are lifelong skills that children need to cement. When parents spot "unfriendly" behaviors, they should keep explanations simple. Toddlers can usually understand statements, like, "Hands are for gentle touches," and "When we hit, it hurts." Point out natural consequences, such as, "If we hit our friends, they will not

want to play with us." When kids can understand why certain limits are important, they will be able to follow them more successfully. You may even try to ask your child: "What do you think would happen if you didn't share your blocks with your friend?" This will help them understand the natural consequences for their action. In the end, we want to guide them toward positive actions, which result in positive consequences.

Modeling correct behaviors and offering your child opportunities to practice being a friend are also important in supporting a preschooler's development. Playdates, role-playing different interactions (can I play with you, can I have the car, etc), and praising your kids when you see good friendship skills will help your child ace this goal.

These are just a few goals that you and your preschooler can make together—and ones that we work on at the Jewish Preschool on Sardis. As I know and many of the teachers can attest to, some goals are harder to achieve than others. But watching our students eventually fulfill these goals is so gratifying and as a parent, you'll get the same pleasure seeing your child achieve his or her accomplishments. ☆

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## Community News

### 2010 Film Festival Has Asian, Sports Connections

We have all heard the old saying "What do Jews do on Christmas? Chinese food and a movie." The 6th Annual Charlotte Jewish Film Festival returns March 4-14, 2010, and this Festival has somewhat of an Asian flavor. Three of the terrific films to

be screened, *A Matter of Size*, *Noodle* and *In Hana's Suitcase*, have an Eastern influence. *A Matter of Size*, sponsored by the Charlotte Chapter of Hadassah, will kick off the Festival on Opening Night. This heartwarming comedy tells the tale of four overweight guys who decide to stop fighting the battle of the bulge and start embracing it. What better way to utilize their size than to train to become sumo wrestlers? More than just a crowd-pleasing comedy, this is a sweet and touching story of self-acceptance and determination.

There also seems to be a sports theme running through the Festival. The old cliché that Jews don't play sports is certainly debunked with the documentary films *The First Basket* and *Holy Land Hardball*. Did you know it was a Jew, Ossie Schectman, who made the first ever basket in an NBA game back in 1946? *The First Basket* is an enthralling documentary that traces the profound influence that Jewish pioneers had on the evolution of basketball as it grew from a game played with ash-cans on tenement steps to one of the most popular sports in the world. In *Holy Land Hardball*, a group of avid baseball fans try to bring the American pastime to Israel by setting up the Israel Baseball League. The question is whether Israelis are ready to embrace a sport they have gone over 5000 years without. This is an entertaining film that transcends sports and speaks to the power of pursuing a pipedream despite impossible odds.

The 6th Annual Charlotte Jewish Film Festival is certain to



Scene from "A Matter of Size"

have something for everyone. The award winning films from around the world run the gamut from psychological thriller to heartwarming comedies to engaging documentaries. Be sure to check the February *Charlotte Jewish News* for an insert with the whole lineup of fantastic films coming your way. Also, visit our website, www.charlottejewishfilm.com, for updates and to purchase tickets in late January.

Charlotte Jewish Film Festival is brought to you by the Levine JCC and the Charlotte Chapter of Hadassah, and is made possible, in part, with funding by the Arts & Science Council and the North Carolina Arts Council, an agency of the Department of Cultural Resources, and the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art. ☆

