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HASSAN MUSTHAFA USMAN, a father of four children, shares his views on resolutions.

Phan Yeehan (top left) introduced the annual tradition of making New Year resolutions when her children were around seven years old. From left, Rishi, Rishika and Pithan stand on the 11, 12 and 13 respectively. (PHOTO: PHAN YEEHAN)

NEW GOALS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Kick off 2023 by helping your kids set resolutions to give them purpose and drive for the year



Eliza Chia
Correspondent

What are your New Year resolutions? As you set your goals for 2023, ask your children to think about theirs too.

After all, resolutions are not just for adults. They are a great way for children to start the year too, educators say.

This has been an annual tradition for Madam Yeehan Yeehan, 42, a single mother of three children, Rishi, Rishika and Pithan, who are 11, 12 and 13 respectively.

They are now aged 11, 12 and 13.

It is a tradition passed down from her parents, Madam Yeehan, who is from the National Institute of Early Childhood Development, says. "When I was a child, they always gave me a new bag, stationery and shoes to start the year. They would also ask if I planned to do anything different from the previous year."

Associate Professor Tan Ah Ling, 56, from the National Institute of Education (NIE), says making resolutions provides children with purpose and drive for the year.

"The hope of being able to do better is a powerful force for kids to grow," says Prof Tan, deputy head of Teaching and Curriculum Matters at the National Institute of Education's education research group NIEE.

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GET THE CONVERSATION GOING

Why is it important to set goals as you enter the new year? For primary school children and teenagers, you can discuss how setting resolutions will give them a sense of direction and better control of their life.

For pre-teens, Madam Yeehan suggests simplifying the concept by telling them, "Let's do something new and exciting this year."

USE WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO ACCOMPLISH

Let your kids set their own goals, so they will have a sense of accomplishment when they succeed in achieving them, says Madam Yeehan.

Do not underestimate or pressure them. Give them room to think, and guide them slowly if they are unsure, you can suggest appropriate ones.

The emphasis should always be on your children's interests and not to make you happy, she says.

KEEP A POSITIVE MINDSET

If you find your children's resolutions unrealistic, do not discuss them by saying, "See how you can achieve them?"

Madam Yeehan says, "Let's see how you can achieve them?"

Prof Tan's daughter Simon, a 17-year-old high school student, appreciates that her parents would make time to listen to her children's resolutions.

Prof Tan suggests that parents guide their kids to set goals based on their school schedule.

For instance, if they wish to pick up a new musical instrument such as the guitar, they should consider how much time they have left after school and enrichment classes, and not just family time.

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SET MILESTONES AND CHECKPOINTS

Besides working out a timeline with your kids to accomplish their goals, set milestones and checkpoints, says Prof Tan. These can be weekly, monthly or even every 10 weeks during school holidays.

For instance, if they are learning to play the piano, you can have checkpoints, such as listening to a recording, going a distance of 10m and having the confidence to perform in the park.

Madam Yeehan monitors her young children's progress and the timeline to help them achieve it. It is not too soon.

Through one-on-one talks to show the start and track dates of their goals, and use them on their goals.

NO RESOLUTIONS IS ALSO OK

When setting goals, encourage your kids to think about what can be accomplished easily and what is a challenge.

Prof Tan says, "It's okay if they don't have any resolutions. The important thing is to have a goal and a plan to achieve it."

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Associate Professor Tan Ah Ling, 56, from the National Institute of Education (NIE), says making resolutions provides children with purpose and drive for the year.

Whether your kids succeed or fail at their goals, Prof Tan says these experiences can help them to better understand their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their preferences and characteristics.

There is how you can guide your children in making, and keeping, New Year resolutions.

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Growing stronger as a family

PHOTO

short track, says Madam Yeehan. The 10-year-old son Rishi, 10, who is pursuing an interest in engineering, hopes to become an engineer. Rishi, 10, who is pursuing an interest in engineering, hopes to become an engineer. Rishi, 10, who is pursuing an interest in engineering, hopes to become an engineer.

BEYOND SCHOOL GOALS

Besides setting for a place at a local university in 2024, Madam Yeehan also has goals for her children to become more independent and responsible.

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the way for them and how they can progress that from happening again, says Madam Yeehan.

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