



A Financial Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Can you picture your financial goals for the next year clearly in your mind? How about five or 10 years down the road? Do the images of what you want to accomplish financially begin to blur as you project into the future? If it's difficult for adults to visualize and focus on their long-term financial goals, can you imagine how hard it is for kids?

When I taught elementary students, I discussed the importance of setting and working toward savings goals. My class generally responded by choosing a few things they would like to work toward in the future. Most students had “tunnel vision,” deciding to focus on and save for one item at a time. Very few had the big picture approach to goal setting. And if a big picture overview of your financial future does not exist, kids (as well as adults) tend to lose focus on the process of attaining their goals.

A creative solution to this problem is to develop a “financial vision board.” This vision board is a tool used to help identify and maintain focus on financial goals. These boards can be tangible reminders that reinforce your future goal intentions and help you to develop a positive attitude toward finances. A well-constructed board can give you visual joy and hope for your financial future.

Wondering how to go about creating a vision board with your child? Use page 26 to guide you through the process. Begin with brainstorming short-term goals—those items that can be saved for in less than a year. List ideas and narrow them down to two or three that your child is the most motivated to accomplish. Ideas can include clothes, shoes, electronics or vacation money. Next, tackle long-term goals. Ask your children what they

dream of spending their money on in five, 10 and even 20 years. Use specific ages to help them focus, by saying, “What savings goals can you picture having at age 15? Age 25? Remind them to consider that they may be continuing their education or even married with kids in the future. Long-term ideas might include paying for college, a car, or a home. Again, list their ideas and narrow down to the most appropriate goals.

Now let the creativity begin. Purchase a poster board and gather markers or crayons, scissors, glue and magazines or catalogs. Challenge your children to find and cut out pictures or photos that represent both their short and long-term goals. If they are unable to find an appropriate image, they can always draw their interpretation on the poster board. Once they find visuals for all their goals, they should arrange and glue them on the poster board, putting those that are “high priority” in the most prominent positions. It is important to include their own photo on the board, so that they can personalize their goals. Children can write descriptive words underneath each visual, such as “my No. 1 goal for age 15.” Older kids can develop a more detailed timeline, listing future years and gluing their goals along the way. This method will give them a financial path to follow to achieve their goals.

Once your children's financial work of art is completed, help them find a place to display their masterpiece, preferably a place where they will see it every day. As they view their board regularly, they will reinforce their goals in their subconscious mind, which has been found to react to color and pictures better than written words. It is important that your children try to visualize the process of achieving each goal, not just the final goal itself. To solidify their ideas,

they can think of “financial affirmations,” or positive sayings that they can repeat to themselves like mantras. You may hear your child saying, “I will be successful in saving for my tablet” multiple times a day.

For those savers who would rather use technology to create and display their financial goals, there are free vision board apps to download at www.makeavisionboard.com/vision-board-apps. Using Google images and Pinterest to create a vision board is also an option. Be sure they include a “selfie” or self-photo to personalize their digital board.

Designing a financial vision board should give kids a tangible focus and help incentivize them to follow through in order to attain their financial goals. Once they have accomplished

their short-term goals successfully, they will have the impetus to dive into their long-term goals. Using this technique to envision their financial aspirations should pave the way for goal achievement throughout their lives.

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Financial Education Resources

The Kansas City Fed is committed to promoting economic and financial literacy and greater knowledge of the Fed’s role by providing resources for teachers, students and the public. Visit our website at KansasCityFed.org for more information. The resources below are a few of many available on this subject.

FEDERAL RESERVE RESOURCES

Common Cents: Financial Responsibility Begins in Childhood

This article suggests a step-by-step approach to teaching kids about short and long-term savings goals. For all ages.

www.KansasCityFed.org/~media/files/publicat/ten/pdf/spring2009/commoncents.pdf

Common Cents: Investments:

The Gifts that Keep on Giving

This article shares ways to successfully save and help your money grow through savings accounts, certificates of deposit, savings bonds and stock investments. For all ages.

www.KansasCityFed.org/~media/files/publicat/ten/pdf/fall2011/commoncents.pdf

FICTION BOOKS

Beatrice’s Goat by Page McBrier

A true story of young girl from Uganda who receives a goat that helps her family reach their savings goals. From Heifer Project International. For ages 6-10.

NONFICTION BOOKS

Smart Goals: Goal setting for Kids and Teens by Arnie Lightning

This book focuses on setting goals you are capable of achieving, and how to overcome roadblocks along the way. For ages 8-18.

Vision Board: How to Create a Powerful Vision

by Charles Jensen

This book discusses the power of visualization to attain your goals and how to develop an action plan. Includes examples of completed vision boards. For all ages.

Creating a Vision of Your Financial Future

Are you ready to set your financial goals for the future?

Follow these steps to design a vision board to help you accomplish your short- and long-term goals along the way.

Step 1:

Brainstorm and list some short-term financial goals. (Short-term goals can be attained in less than a year.) Ideas could be clothes, toys, electronics or saving for holiday and birthday presents. Narrow down your list to the two or three that you REALLY want to achieve and circle them.

Step 2:

Brainstorm and list some long-term goals. (Long-term goals usually take a year or more to attain.) Think about how old you will be in five, 10 or more years and what you might need at those ages. Ideas could be a computer, car, college tuition or a home. Narrow down your list to the two or three that you WANT to achieve and circle them.

Step 3:

Gather your art supplies, magazines, catalogs and a large poster board. Cut out pictures that represent your chosen goals. (You can also look on Google images to find goal pictures.)

Step 4:

Arrange your pictures on the poster board, putting those that are most important to you at the top or center. Find a photo of YOU to display to show it's YOUR vision.

Step 5:

Glue all pictures and write descriptive captions underneath. (You can label them short or long term, or write when you'd like to achieve each goal.)

Step 6:

Display your vision board in your room or a place where you'll see it every day. Look at it often to make your goals a reality!

