

## BENCHMARKING YOUR TEEN

### Goals

Goals are dreams and plans for how you want to spend your resources. They are especially useful when you have very limited time, energy, and money. Goals help you not overspend in the marketplace when you see something you think you want. If you know your goals, you can make good decisions and trade offs so that you get the most satisfaction from your choices. Goals have a way of changing as we learn more about ourselves and what we want from life. Do a goal check regularly to see if yours have changed.

### Short-Term Goals

List your plans for the near future, today, tomorrow, next week, the summer.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### Long-Term Goals

List your plans for the future as far as you can think, next year, three years. Saving for education beyond high school would be an example of long-term goal or saving up to buy an automobile.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Whenever you pull out your wallet to spend a dollar, ask yourself if this expenditure will help you achieve your goals. If it doesn't, maybe spending isn't what you want to do or maybe you need to change your goal. Short-term fun may cost you a long-term goal.

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### Financial Planning

Do you want to know how your teen's financial concepts and skills are developing? Have your teen complete this questionnaire. Then talk with them about areas they'd like to improve. (You might want to take it first to see how you rate, too. You can help each other improve.)

On a 1 to 5 scale, 1 being not at all, 2 occasionally, 3 many times, 4 most of the time, and 5 always mark how these statements reflect your behavior.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I have financial goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. I have certain weekly expenses for which I am responsible.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. I set aside money now for the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. I pay fixed expenses first. (car payments, gas, lunch, loan, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. I have a filing system for my bills and wage receipts.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. I plan how I spend my money.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. I regularly check to be sure my income is meeting my expenses.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. I know where my money goes.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. If my budget seems unrealistic I change it.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. I save for long-term financial goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
11. If I cannot meet expenses, I reduce the amount I spend.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12. If I cannot meet expenses, I would consider ways of increasing my income.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13. I save all my wage and purchase receipts.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14. If it is appropriate, I seek information before making decisions concerning my money.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
15. I feel I can talk about my financial decisions with others in my family.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
16. My parents/ guardians let me help in the family's financial decision making.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
17. My parents/ guardians talk about financial decisions in front of me.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
18. I ask my parents/ guardians for advice in my financial decision making.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
19. When I have credit obligations (credit cards/ loans) I pay the bill before it is due.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
20. I routinely put money away in a savings account.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
21. If I have a checking account, I immediately record deposits and withdrawals in my checkbook.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
22. I balance my checkbook regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Answers in the 4 and 5 range are great, 1 and 2 means you have some work ahead.

\*Based on a thesis by Maria R. Pippidis, "Family Influence on the Acquisition of Teen Financial Management Behaviors- A Preliminary Study Using Socialization Theory," 1989 Cornell university.

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### Consumer Concepts

Do you want to know your teen's marketplace concepts and buymanship are developing? Ask him/ her to answer the questions below. Then talk about what he/she thinks he/ she does really well and what areas ought to be improved. (You might want to answer the questions first to see what role model you're setting.)

On a scale of 1 to 5, mark the number that best describes your actions in the marketplace. A 1 means never, 2 occasionally, 3 many times, 4 most of the time, and 5 always.

- |                                                                                                      | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I keep my budget in mind when I shop.                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I use coupons when I shop.                                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I use the store ad flyers to comparison shop stores.                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I shop for bargains, things with good price and quality to give me value.                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I comparison shop for expensive items.                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I comparison shop for inexpensive items.                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. I buy brand name items.                                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. I mail in rebate certificates.                                                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. I buy items on impulse.                                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. I spend whatever cash I have in my pocket.                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. I gather information about expensive products and services before purchasing.                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. For expensive items I consult my parent/ guardian.                                               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. I make a list before I go shopping.                                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. I make purchasing decisions on my own.                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. If I'm unhappy with a product I buy, I try to think about what I could do differently next time. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. I know where to go to complain about a product.                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. I save up for a specific item before I purchase it.                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. I spend money on what I need first, then decide if I have things left over for what I want.      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. I spend my money on me.                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. I like to spend some of my money on others.                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. I talk to my parent/ guardian about many of my purchases before I buy.                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |

You have a good beginning handle on marketplace concepts if you answered 4 or 5 on all but the following: #7 should be 1 or 2 (brands can be very costly for less value); #9 and #10 should be 1 or 2 (impulse shopping blows your money and your goals); and #19 and #20 are value statements.

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## BENCHMARKING YOUR TEEN

Use this sheet to set up an income and spending plan for the week. A plan will help you meet the goals you set for yourself. It's really easy to impulse spend when you not clear about your goals. Use the goal setting sheet before you set up a spending plan.

EARNINGS PLAN for the month of \_\_\_\_\_

INCOME	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Allowance	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Job	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total Weekly	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total Monthly _____					

\*You might want to note difference between income you are sure of and expected income. I.e. you usually mow the neighbor's lawn weekly. This is expected, but you might skip a week due to drought or you usually babysit every Friday night, but it could be cancelled- no work, no pay.)

EXPENSES for the month of \_\_\_\_\_

INCOME	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
<b>COMMITTED</b>					
Savings	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Charity/ Church	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Gas	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Telephone	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Automobile	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Committed Total _____					
<b>FLEXIBLE PLANNED</b>					
Food (snacks, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Recreation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Clothes	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Personal Items	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Gifts	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Flexible Total _____					
Weekly Totals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Committed Monthly Total _____					
Flexible Monthly Total _____					
Expense Total _____					
INCOME _____					
COMMITTED _____					
Balance left for Flexible _____					

If total expenses exceed total income you have several options: 1) cut back your expenses, 2) find ways to earn more money or 3) both, cut back and look for ways to earn more money.