Why is it important to talk about school performance?
Education plays an important part in a child's growth and development. For this reason, parents should try to build links between home and school. This activity can help parents and children discuss goals and set rules for the school year.

What do we need?
tape recorder and cassette tapes or spiral-bound notebook; school supplies (optional); single sheets of paper; envelopes; a backpack

How long will it take?
one hour at the beginning and one hour at the end of a new school semester

What do we do?
At the beginning of the semester
• Prepare a “backpack grab bag” by wrapping a few school supplies (notebooks, pens, erasers, etc.).
• Schedule an evening sometime during the first weeks of school for the family to have a special meal. If the budget permits, the family may want to eat out.
• After the meal, get the family together to tape-record or write down interviews with each student about
  –first impressions of teachers, classes, classmates, etc.
  –predictions for the year (for example, which classes will be the most and least enjoyable, etc.)
• Give each student an envelope and a piece of paper to write down the following goals.
  –grades he will work toward
  –a sport or other extracurricular activity he will get involved in
  –a new friend he will try to make
• Have students write their names on the envelopes and put their list of goals inside. Collect the envelopes and put them away until the end of the semester.
• Decide on homework rules. Your family may decide to limit guests, phone calls, or television during study hours. Record the rules on a piece of paper and post them so everyone will be reminded of them frequently.
• End the celebration by having each student take a gift to unwrap from the “backpack grab bag.”

At the end of the semester
• After semester grades have been received, arrange for the family to share another special meal. After the meal, play back or read aloud the interviews you made at the beginning of the semester.
• Pass out the envelopes containing the goals made at the beginning of the semester.
• Repeat the goal-setting activity for the second semester.
• Discuss any changes that should be made in study habits, homework schedules, etc.

Option. Repeat this activity for each grading period.

What happened?
▼ Which of the suggested activities did your family decide to do?

What did you learn?
▼ How did having goals to work toward affect your school performance?
▼ How did having rules about homework affect your grades this semester?
▼ What do homework rules have to do with meeting your goals?

Why was this activity important?
▼ Why is it important to set goals for a new school year?
▼ Why is it important to have rules about homework?
▼ Why is it important for your parents to know what’s happening in school?

What’s next?
▼ Is this something your family would like to do next semester?
▼ What other rules are important to follow?
▼ What rules do you think you’ll have to follow when you get out of school?
▼ What kinds of goals would you like to set outside of school? And what kinds of rules would you have to set for yourself in order to meet them?