



What Is the Objective?

A simple decision making tool for any parenting challenge.

One of the questions I find myself asking parents most often is:

What is the objective?

When we're clear about what we're really trying to achieve, we often discover there is more than one way to get there.

This isn't about lowering expectations.

It's about making sure the path is still leading where we want to go.

Step 1: What is the activity?

What is the situation you're thinking about?

Examples:

- Reading
- Homework
- Piano lessons
- Hockey
- Screen time
- Chores
- Family dinners
- Bedtime
- Making friends
- Studying for a test

Your activity:

Step 2: What is the real objective?

Ask yourself:

What am I actually hoping my child gains from this?

Try to think beyond the activity itself.

Activity	Possible objectives
Reading	Curiosity, learning, empathy, imagination, understanding, vocabulary, enjoyment
Homework	Practising a skill, responsibility, independence, identifying gaps in understanding,
Piano	Creativity, discipline, perseverance, enjoyment
Hockey	Teamwork, resilience, confidence, physical wellbeing
Screen limits	Balance, healthy habits, making space for other experiences
Chores	Contribution, responsibility, life skills, teamwork
Family dinners	Connection, conversation, belonging

My objective is...

Step 3: What are all the possible ways of getting there?

Once the objective is clear, it becomes easier to think creatively.

There is rarely only one path.

For example:

Objective: Understanding a story

Possible paths:

- Reading independently
- Reading together
- Listening to an audiobook
- Reading a graphic novel
- Watching the film and discussing it
- Using AI to read aloud while following the text

Objective: Learning about history

Possible paths:

- Books
- Documentaries
- Museums
- Podcasts
- Historical fiction
- Conversations with others

What other paths could help my child reach the same objective?

Step 4: Which path best supports the child standing in front of me?

Every child is different.

The best path isn't always the most traditional one.

Ask yourself:

- Which approach is most likely to help my child move toward the objective?
- Which approach protects their confidence?
- Which approach keeps their curiosity alive?
- Which approach helps them believe they are capable of learning?

What feels like the best fit right now?

A thought to leave you with

Sometimes we become so focused on *how* something should happen that we lose sight of *why* we wanted it in the first place.

Hold on to the objective.

Be willing to explore different paths.

Because in the end, we'll support our children, encourage them, and equip them with every tool we can, but never at the expense of their confidence, their curiosity, or their belief that they are capable of learning.