*PERSONAL GOAL STATEMENT*
**FORMAT FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION**

The first paragraph of your personal statement, one or two sentences, should make clear the purpose of your writing: to present an interpretive summary of your background, academic interests, and future goals as justification for your admission to our graduate program in Applied Developmental Psychology (ADP).

The second paragraph should establish your academic preparation for the ADP program. If you have been a strong student, you may call attention to strong combinations of courses that seem to fit this graduate program well. If you have had ups and downs as an undergraduate, you may call attention to progressive improvement in your studies. If you scored well on the GRE, you may want to cite that fact. If you have had relevant experiences, you may mention them here as well. This paragraph should assure our graduate admissions committee that you have matured during, or since, your undergraduate years, that your intellectual and professional interests have taken shape, and that you have begun progress toward professional development.

The third paragraph can be a description of your professional goals. (This paragraph and the next, however, could be reversed.) This paragraph describes what you know about the professional careers to which this course of graduate study may lead. Generally, people who pursue graduate degrees in Applied Developmental Psychology tend to gravitate toward academia, public service or the private research sector. Though you do not have to commit yourself to one career, you are best served by presenting to the admissions committee as specific an idea as possible about what you intend to do with your degree. This paragraph, in conjunction with the previous one, assures our admissions committee that you are an applicant with a purpose.

The fourth paragraph, describes what you intend to study in graduate school. Now that you have made clear your interests, background, and professional goals, you must make the case that the best way for you to bridge your undergraduate years and your successful performance as a professional is to study what this particular graduate program offers. Be as specific as you can. **Note whether you are applying to the part-time or full-time track.** Learn what courses we offer. Identify faculty members whose work interests you and note what research they are conducting. Know our program's reputation, its strengths and its weaknesses. Our website and your undergraduate professors can be of assistance in this regard. As you describe your reasons for applying to our program, try to connect your interests with what you know is available through our program and the organizations to which it is linked (e.g., Office of Child Development, University Community Leaders & Individuals with Disabilities – UCLID – Center, Craig Academy). If our teaching practicum is something you see as especially useful to your professional goals, say so. In sum, this paragraph, accomplishes two ends: you place our graduate program in the continuum of your own professional development and you demonstrate that you have applied to it as the result of an informed, reflective selection process of your own.

Your personal statement should close with a brief summary of your background and goals, again just a sentence or two. This last statement reaffirms both your preparation and your confidence that your choice of our graduate program is right.