

Promoting Self-Efficacy in the return to school

Teaching children about strengths, self-belief,
control factors and affirmations

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What is self-efficacy?

Self-efficacy is a more developed version of self-belief. Not only do you believe in yourself, but you believe that your actions will have an impact and make a difference. Children and young adults can often understand and display self-belief, but struggle to see their impact on other people and the wider world.

Self-efficacy also links closely with resilience. When we are faced with a challenging situation, self-belief encourages us to face that challenge, but self-efficacy keeps us going once things get tough. Self-efficacy helps us to see that our abilities can help us to achieve difficult things despite any setbacks.

Appropriate Vocabulary

For primary school aged and younger children, it is worth noting that they may not be able to access some of the terms used in this document. Below are some suggestions for how they may articulate their understanding of these concepts at an age-appropriate level.

	Self-belief	Self-efficacy	Abilities	Control factors	Relationships
EYFS	Use phrases such as "I can do it!" "I've got this!" "I believe in myself"	"I can help ..." (considering individuals they know)	Ask, discuss and answer "what am I good at?"	Supported to understand what we can and can't change.	Who can help me? – will mostly think about trusted adults.
KS1		As above May link to responsibilities and consider local or personal communities	Ask, discuss and answer "what skills do I have?" begin to reflect on what may be more difficult	Discuss with adults and peers what we can and can't change and reflect on this independently.	Children realise that as well as trusted adults, there are experts in fields and we can draw upon their knowledge to help also.
KS2	Start to use 'self-belief' as a familiar term for discussing their own skills. May also use the statements used by EYFS/KS1.	Will consider their impact on close relationships, family, friends, communities, worldwide initiatives, etc.	Children can articulately discuss what they strive in and what they find difficult.	Children anticipate what they will and won't be able to change when undertaking a new challenge.	

Activities and Ideas

The idea of self-efficacy has a great link to fables. For example, in the Tortoise and the Hare, despite the Tortoise knowing that the Hare is a much faster creature, he understands his ability to keep going, accepts that he can't change the Hare's natural abilities and pushes on to win the race anyway. This is a great initial teaching point to any children who are already familiar with fables and can be differentiated by the length of the fable or the complexity of the moral being discussed.

We can link the story to our current experiences using some key questions, these examples are directly linked to the Tortoise and the Hare but can be changed to suit:

- Was the tortoise likely to win the race?
- What skills did the tortoise use?
- What could the tortoise control?
- What couldn't the tortoise control?
- Did anybody help him?

We can then look at reflecting these questions on to our current circumstances:

- What's happening at the moment in our world?
- What skills are we going to need to use?
- What can we control?
- What can't we control?
- Can anybody help us?

For younger children, this would be very much discussion based in a group setting or recorded in the template below. Older children could be given time to make notes and reflect independently following a discussion. Following on from this, there are a number of activities that can extend the learning:

1. Children discuss and/or write about their own skills and abilities and how these will help them overcome challenges
2. Children discuss and/or write about each other's skills and abilities to overcome challenges
3. Children set goals/challenges and list skills they have or might need to develop to overcome this – older children may also consider control factors and identify people who can help
4. Children write a set of instructions for something they feel is a 'skill' of theirs and share it with their peers.

Skills and abilities are inside your head.
Things you can control are in your hands.
People who can help are in your heart.
Things you can't control are outside of your body.

