



KEY SEL SKILLS: SELF-MANAGEMENT

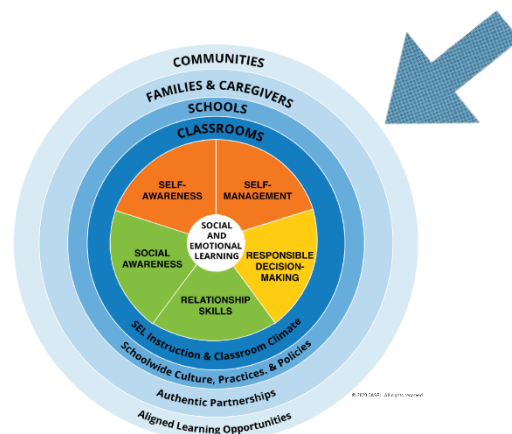
WHAT IS SELF-MANAGEMENT?

Self-management refers to our ability to manage our emotions and set and persist toward goals that are aligned with meeting our needs, values and desires. It is a skill that can be learned and practiced by any child, teen or adult at any time.

WHAT DOES SELF-MANAGEMENT LOOK LIKE?

Children and teens are learning self-management in differing ways at each age and stage. Children who are growing their self-management skills may:

- verbalize what they are feeling.
- find healthy coping strategies to manage uncomfortable emotions including seeking support from a caring person (e.g., counting to 10, removing themselves from a negative situation and taking deep breaths).
- Understand that all actions have consequences, and that their choices determine those consequences.
- Act with agency*, or choice-making, to set and attain goals.



**To exercise agency, an individual needs to have their safety needs met, and the freedom and access to make deliberate choices. Equity is therefore foundational to agency.*

HOW CAN PARENTS FOSTER SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS?

Parents can...

- Articulate and validate feelings to build a vocabulary identifying and offering an understanding for their inner experience. "Name it to tame it" works!
- Co-create a list of coping strategies for times of upset when we need to do something to feel better or calm down (e.g., hug a pillow, write in a journal or walk outside).
- Reflect together after calming down starting with empathetic listening. If children struggle to voice feelings, offer language like "it seems like you were frustrated, is that right?"
- Provide access to safe tools and resources children can use to meet their needs independently as they grow (e.g., provide child-sized tables and chairs, snacks and utensils that are on their eye level and within reach, school supplies ready for homework time).
- Educate about the role of emotions, especially challenging ones such as the importance of fear to identify threats or anger to fuel change.
- Co-create and practice daily routines together like morning, homework, dinner and bedtime and including household chores so that children understand and can take responsibility for age-appropriate tasks.
- Allow children to experience natural consequences and build resilience, by avoiding saving them from all failures or disappointments.



RESOURCES

- [Big Feelings List](#)
- Coping Strategy Ideas - [Grades K-4](#), [Grades 5-12](#)
- [Household Responsibilities Example Chart by Age/Stage](#)
- Want to learn more about the skill of self-management? Check out the [CASEL 5 Social and Emotional Skills](#).

EXTEND THE LEARNING

If a child tries out for a sport and does not make the team, allow them to feel a sense of disappointment and talk them through what could be done to better position themselves for the next tryout. Or if your child gets a poor grade, reflect on whether they tried their best. Strategize together on how they can improve their learning for the next time.