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.