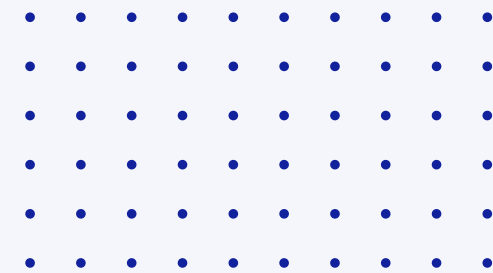
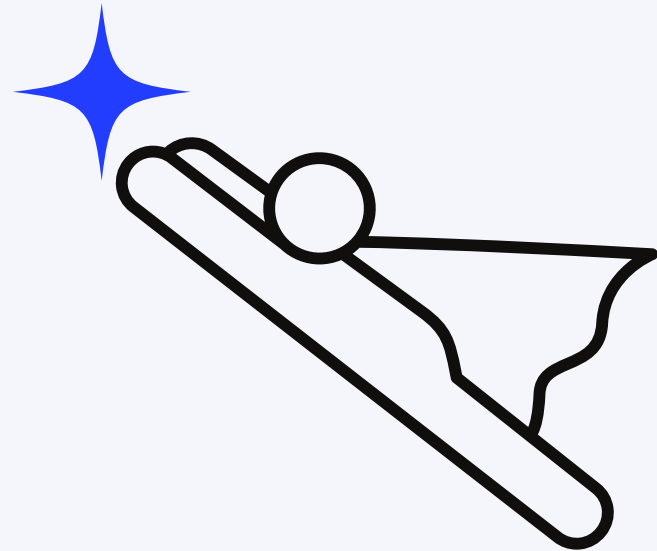


SELF-ADVOCACY

A Lesson on Mindset

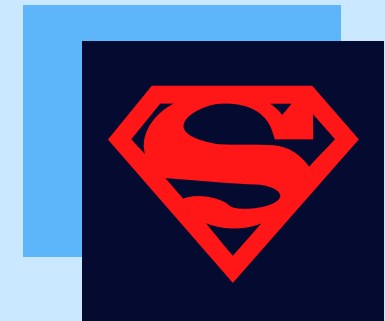


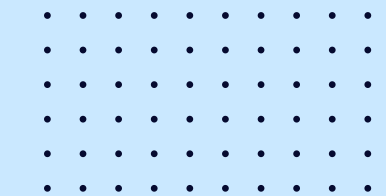
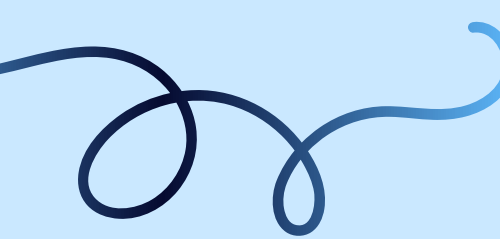
Every child needs a hero who will be...



- ...someone they can trust,
- ...someone who will accept them for who they are,
- ...someone who will mentor them, not control them,
- ...someone who will encourage them to seek answers,
- ...someone who will encourage them to be themselves,
- ...someone who will encourage them to question authority,
- ...someone who will encourage them to question anything,
- ...someone who will encourage them to stand up for themselves,
- ...someone who will encourage them to learn to rely on themselves,
- ...someone who will truly listen to them and not judge them,
- ...someone who will demonstrate mental fortitude,
courage, integrity, and authenticity.

Will you be that hero?



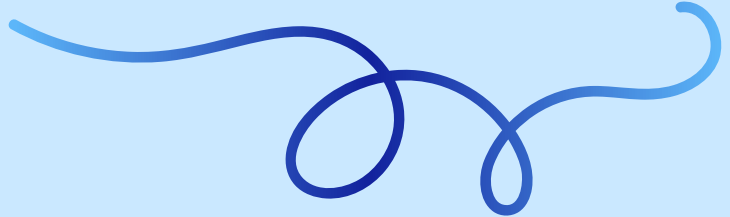


The only way self-advocacy can be learned is when children are allowed to speak up, say how they feel, express themselves, and not be punished for it.



Self-advocacy is part of a healthy mindset. It means you speak up for yourself. You state your needs and wants, and make sure they are being met.

When you advocate for yourself, you are supporting yourself to make sure your voice is heard.





What is Mindset?

How you feel

Your feelings are based on your emotions.
How you respond and react to them
is determined by your mindset

What you believe

A belief is an idea that you hold to be true.
Sometimes we form our own beliefs based on
what we see and know, sometimes other people
enforce their beliefs on us, and sometimes we
adopt other people's beliefs.

How you respond

How you feel and what you believe predetermine what
your responses will be, and that is your mindset.



Importance of Self-advocacy

Developing the practice of self-advocacy involves children being able to speak up for themselves, and adults *allowing them* to speak up for themselves.

More often than not, children are taught to obey orders and **NOT** speak up for themselves. Their voices are suppressed, and they quickly begin to adapt to living a life of apathy because they have been squelched.

They will lose themselves by giving in to others all the time, and people will take advantage of them.



Communication

Children should be allowed and encouraged to say how they are feeling and what they are thinking, and not be punished for it when what they say does not align with what the adult is expecting.

When you admonish a child for what they are saying, you are conditioning them not to communicate.





**There are other parts of a healthy mindset
that work together to drive self-advocacy**



1 SELF-CONFIDENCE

2 SELF-ESTEEM

3 SELF-RESPECT

4 SELF-AWARENESS

5 SELF-WORTH

6 SELF-DETERMINATION

7 SELF-RELIANCE

8 SELF-CONTROL

9 ASSERTIVENESS

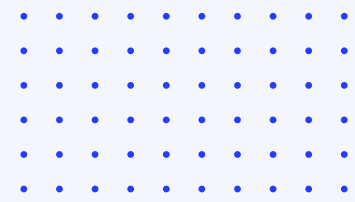
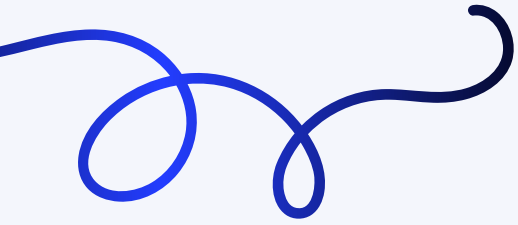
10 AUTHENTICITY

11 COMMUNICATION

12 INDEPENDENCE

13 MANAGEMENT OF FEAR



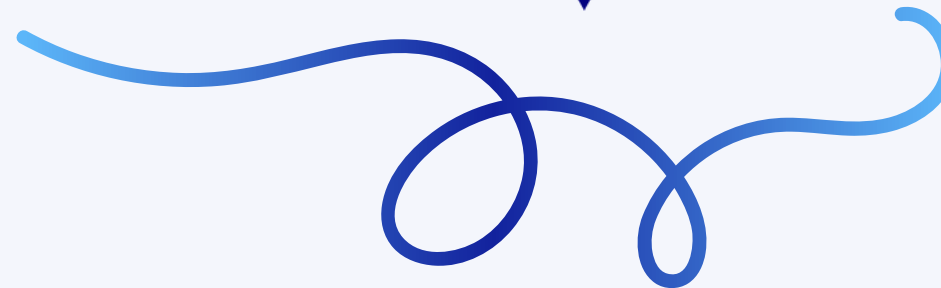


Mindset



The following pages explain each mindset trait and offer strategies to help your children develop these traits for a healthy mindset which will impact their mental health throughout their lives.

Adults may find this information helpful to them as well toward building a new mindset for themselves.





Mindset

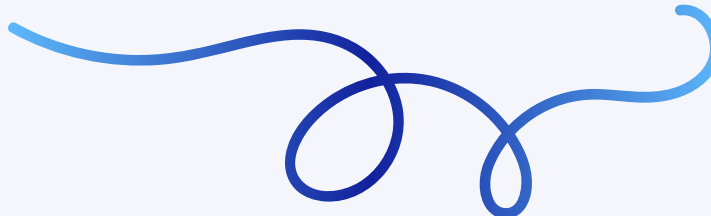


1

SELF-CONFIDENCE

Self-confidence is belief and faith in yourself. You know that you are capable of doing anything you set your mind to, and you're not persuaded by others. When you are self-confident, you are not afraid to take risks and try new things. You are able to handle adversity, express your feelings and opinions, and set boundaries.

Strategy: You can start off by helping a child develop self-confidence by modeling. Show them the belief and strength you have within yourself and how it helps you in your life. Show them how you are able to handle failure and view it as an opportunity to learn and grow from it. When you show children you believe in your abilities, they will learn how to believe in theirs. Show children how you have responsibilities, how you follow through on them, and how good it feels to get things accomplished. *Allow them* to choose tasks and things they are responsible for which will help them build their self-confidence as they feel successful completing their tasks.





Mindset

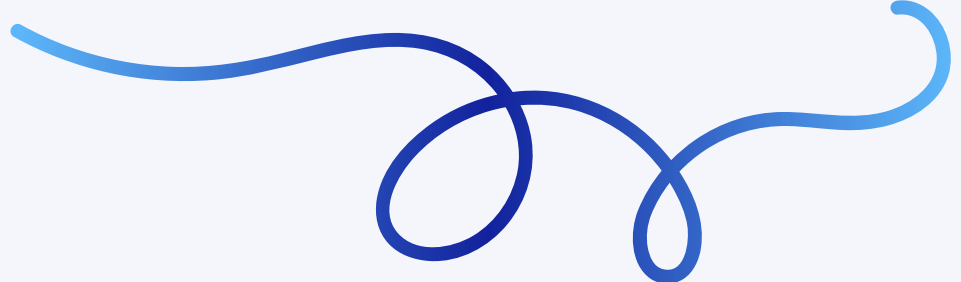


2

SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is how you feel about yourself, not how others feel about you. It is tied in with your sense of self-worth, your value and what you feel you have to offer to yourself and others. It is your sense of how you like yourself. Self-esteem grows when we are allowed the independence to learn things and figure things out on our own. Self-esteem builds your self-confidence because you understand that mistakes will happen, and you learn, grow and use your experiences to help you achieve.

Strategy: Provide children with activities where they can explore, experiment, examine, and understand that mistakes are part of the learning process. *Allow them* to see their own talents and strengths when they are able to do things for themselves and helps to build their self-confidence. They will learn their own value and how special they are!





Mindset

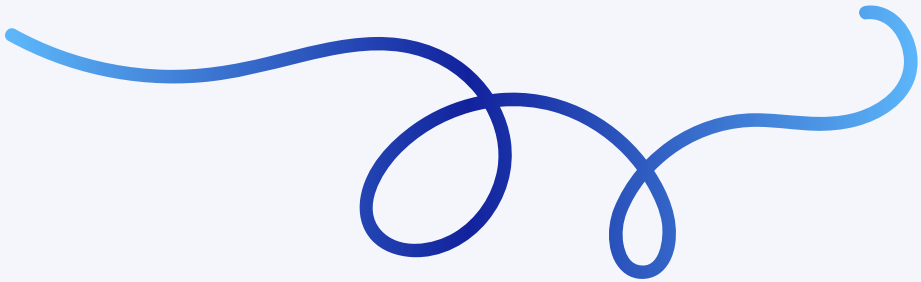
3

SELF-RESPECT



Self-respect means taking care of yourself emotionally and physically. It is knowing your self-worth, your value, and determining the behavior you will accept or not accept from others. It is setting boundaries and not allowing people to disrespect you. Self-respect comes from knowing your self-worth, self-esteem, and self-confidence.

Strategy: *Allow children* to set their own boundaries, and this comes from allowing them to express their personal likes and dislikes. Showing them respect, teaches them respect. Their self-respect is developed when they learn not to compromise who they are for the happiness of someone else.





Mindset

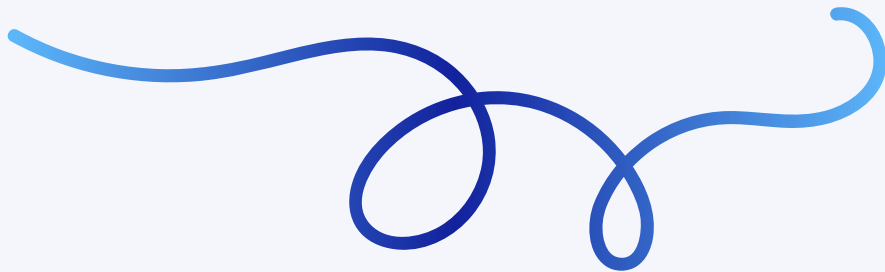


4

SELF-AWARENESS

Self-awareness is knowing who YOU are. You are able to see your strengths and where you need to do better. It comes from talking about your needs and feelings, and seeing that other people have needs and feelings, some which might be different from your own. You are able to see how your behavior affects others. You understand that making mistakes is part of learning and helps you to learn and grow. When you understand yourself and where you're coming from, you are prepared to speak for yourself. It builds self-confidence

Strategy: *Allow children* to learn how they can self-assess so they can build their self-confidence by recognizing their strengths and see for themselves how they can do better. Providing exemplars for them is a great way they can reference to see how they can do better so they can develop the habit of making improvements for themselves.





Mindset



5

SELF-WORTH

Self-worth is knowing how important you are and is related to your self-esteem. It is knowing your value and not settling for anything less. It is knowing that how you feel about yourself is up to you, not what other people think about you. This is where being happy and comfortable with yourself comes from, which should not be dependent on someone else. Learning and doing for yourself helps you to develop self-confidence. You know where you can do better, and you work harder at achieving your goals.

Strategy: *Allow children to do things for themselves and figure things out on their own. Allow them to experience a productive struggle and feel the joy when they can figure things out successfully.*





Mindset

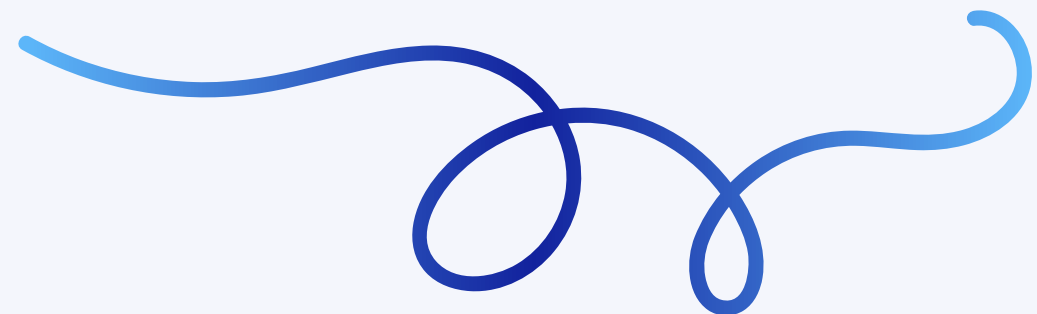


6

SELF-DETERMINATION

Self-determination comes from setting goals for yourself and knowing it is up to you to do whatever it takes to meet those goals. It comes from having the freedom to make decisions about what you are going to do and take control of the outcome. You are in charge of yourself, and you make the decision that you will persevere through obstacles and adversity. You have self-confidence in your abilities and don't allow other people to stop you.

Strategy: Model for children what perseverance and resilience look like by your own actions. When you quit at the first sign of a struggle, they will learn to do the same thing. Choose activities where this can be demonstrated and *allow them* to participate in challenging activities so they can feel what perseverance truly is and experience the results of it.





Mindset

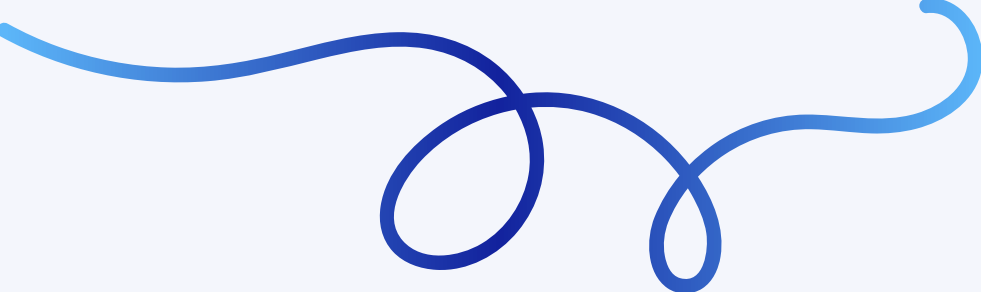


7

SELF-RELIANCE

Self-reliance is the ability to understand that everything you do is dependent on you. You do not expect anyone to help you or do it for you. It is tied in with independence. You need to learn to rely on yourself to be independent. You are going to be on your own throughout your lifetime and you need to learn to depend on yourself. You have confidence in your abilities and know that you will do what you can to help yourself.

Strategy: *Allow children to build confidence in their abilities by allowing them to use their abilities, without you stepping in and solving problems for them.*





Mindset

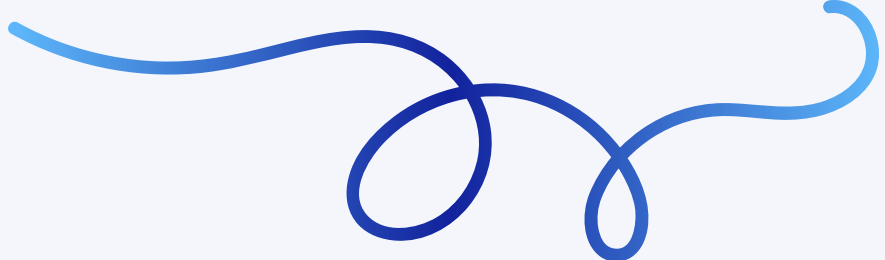


8

SELF-CONTROL

Self-control means you are in charge of your own behavior. It is how you are able to react in a way that is healthy for you. You are able to understand how you are feeling and learn to calm yourself down, so you react appropriately. You know what works best for you, so you don't react in a way that hurts you.

Strategy: Talk with your children about emotions. *Allow them* to express their feelings so they can become self-aware of their actions and consequences. *Allow them* to see how their actions affect themselves and others by talking things through with them. Discuss the importance of choices and how it's up to them to pause, calm down, and decide how things are going to go.





Mindset

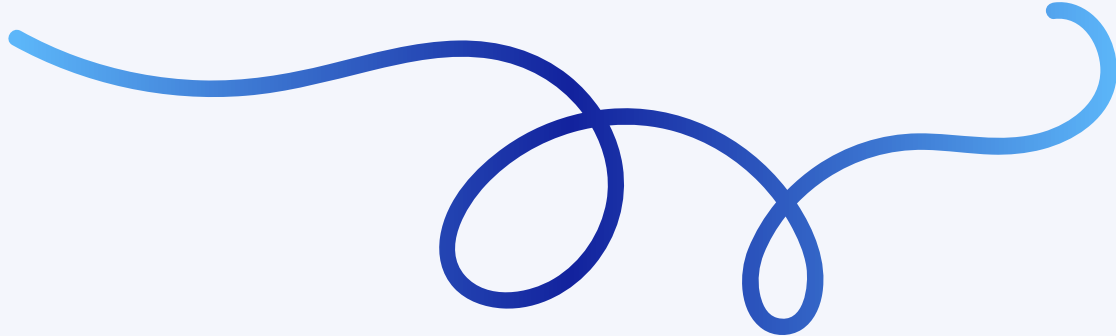


9

ASSERTIVENESS

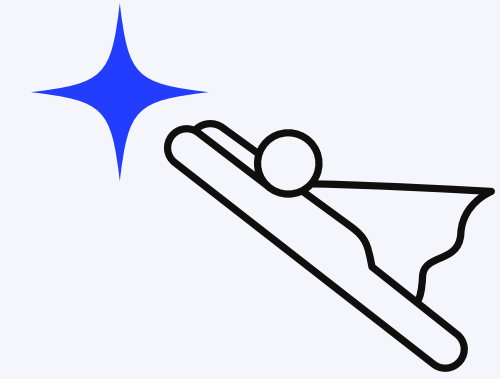
When you are assertive, you are able to communicate your opinions, needs, and wants without holding back. It comes from self-confidence and taking action when you know you are right. It means not allowing people and obstacles to stop you from advocating your ideas, opinions, wants, and needs. Being assertive helps you move forward.

Strategy: Model for your children what assertiveness looks like. When they see you standing up for yourself for what you believe is right, they will learn that behavior. Encourage them to build self-confidence by managing their fears. *Allow them* to work through situations where they can assert themselves to get what they need.





Mindset

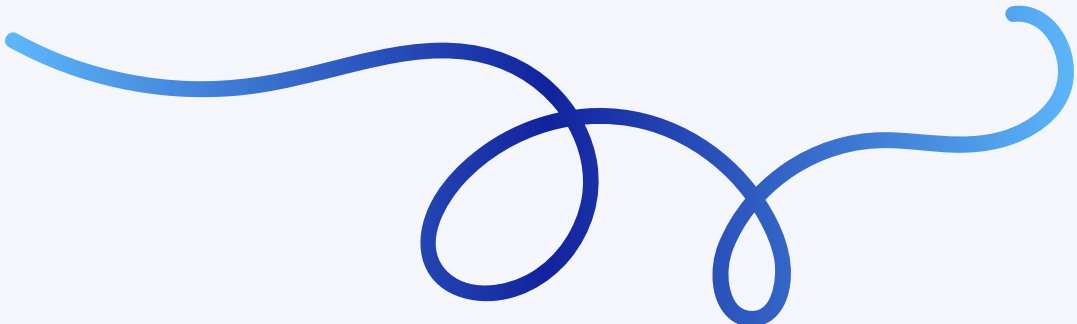


10

AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity is being yourself. It's not allowing anyone to tell you who you should be. You learn to form your own beliefs based on your own feelings and emotions. You question everything and make your own decision about whether or not you want to do something or be something. Authenticity comes from self-confidence, knowing who you truly are and not changing unless you feel it is best for you and your situations.

Strategy: *Allow children* to be themselves, not who you want them to be. They are figuring things out in their minds, and when you allow them to express their feelings without getting judgmental or angry, they will learn from listening to themselves as they talk out their feelings and know it is okay for them to be who they want to be.





Mindset

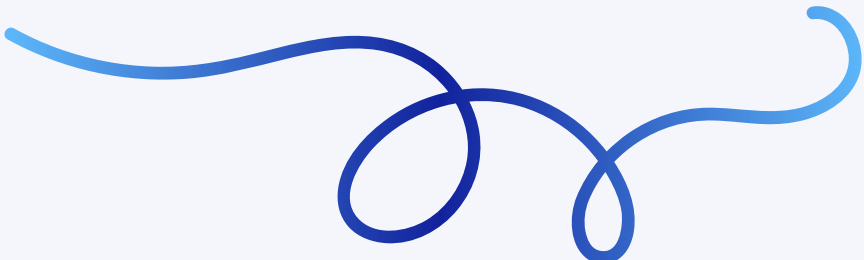


11

COMMUNICATION

Good communication skills are crucial toward giving out our messages so that people will develop a clear understanding of our beliefs, needs, and wants. As we become more self-confident, we find it easier to express ourselves without getting nervous. Focusing on our messages as we are speaking rather than how we are feeling at that moment helps us to be clear and concise without getting emotional.

Strategy: Having conversations with children and listening to them as they share their experiences opens the door to their learning about how to talk and become comfortable with speaking. When you show children you take an interest in them and truly listen to their stories, they will in turn learn how to listen to you. *Allow children* to talk. Children love to talk about themselves, so it is a great way to develop communications skills for when they need to advocate for themselves.





Mindset

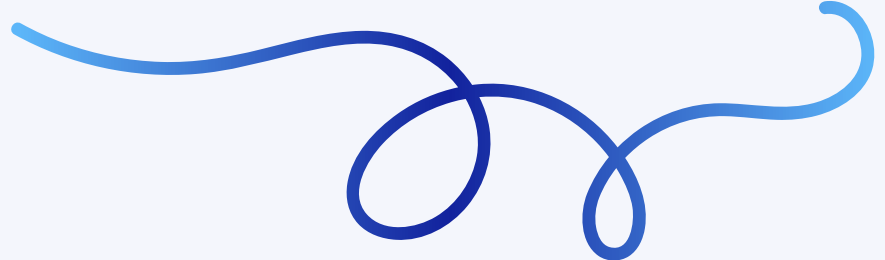


12

INDEPENDENCE

When you are independent, it means you are able to support yourself without anyone else telling you what to do. Being able to handle things on your own is a necessary life skill because there will be many times when you are on your own. Independence is freedom and freedom is being in control of your life and your choices.

Strategy: *Allowing children* to make choices is the first step toward learning to be independent. Once they make choices, they then learn how to take responsibility for the choices they made. *Allow them* opportunities where they can practice making their own decisions about things. When they express their decisions, they are advocating for themselves based on their wants and needs. This is how self-advocacy begins.





Mindset

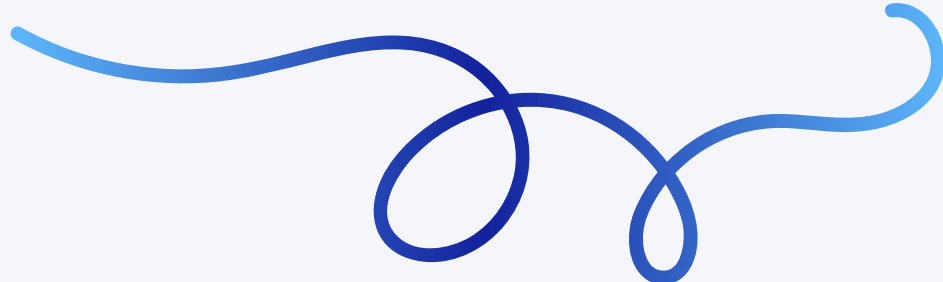


13

MANAGEMENT OF FEAR

In order to manage your fears, know that fear is normal. But being fearful should not stop you from moving forward. You can manage your fears by learning to be self-confident and know that the outcome of what you are going to do is not always guaranteed, failure is a possibility, and with that comes learning. If you do not manage your fears, you will never try anything, and your growth will suffer. You will be stuck in place forever.

Strategy: Encourage children to understand taking risks with their learning is part of learning and not to be afraid of making mistakes. *Allow them* to take on challenging activities so they can experience what it feels like to struggle, learning to forecast “what’s the worst that can happen?” so they will not hold themselves back from the end result.



How to support self-advocacy

It is really not that complicated. *Allow children to be who they are.* Step out of their way, stop giving them all the answers, stop telling them to stop talking, and allow them to think for themselves. Relinquish control and allow them the freedom of critical thinking and encourage them to speak up and express their needs and wants. This is how they build their self-confidence. This is how they learn to advocate for themselves.

- ✓ Exploration
- ✓ Experimentation
- ✓ Examination

The objective is to strengthen an environment that fosters experiences for children to develop the traits of a healthy mindset and encourage activities that allow them to practice self-advocacy while they experience their learning.



Create a learning environment where children can use their voices and make their own choices.





Conclusion



Benefits of Self-advocacy



When you advocate for yourself, you express your needs, wants, and opinions based on your own decisions and do what you believe is best for you



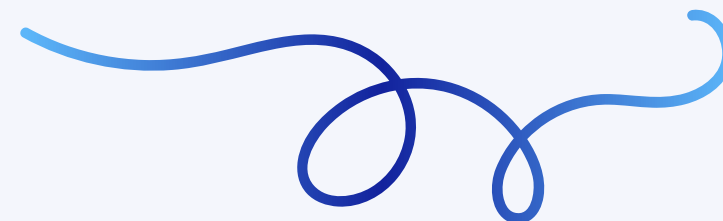
When you advocate for yourself, you maintain control over yourself and stay true to who you are (authenticity)



When you advocate for yourself, you develop good mental health because expressing your needs, wants, and opinions helps you achieve goals and care for yourself



When you advocate for yourself, you maintain a healthy mindset that will help you persevere, learn, grow, and succeed throughout your life



The background features a white canvas with several blue decorative elements: a large light blue shape at the top left, a four-pointed star in the upper center, a blue squiggle on the right side, and a large light blue shape at the bottom. There are also two grids of small blue dots, one in the top left and one in the bottom right.

***Mindset is the core of
everything***

*Petsanis/McCance
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