



**LEARN & GROW TOGETHER**

**Social and Emotional Learning,  
Character, and Executive Function**



**Grown-up Guide**

**A conversation between grown-ups!**

# SESSION 1

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome! In this program, you'll explore how to help your children develop their social and emotional skills and habits. You might hear about social emotional learning as "SEL" in articles, websites, or from your child's teacher. During nine sessions, we'll talk about techniques to support your child's SEL and character development, with the help of tools from PBS KIDS (apps, digital stories, and videos). You'll also get ideas for books, art activities, and games that teach your children to grow up to be thoughtful, kind, and responsible people. In the process, you may even discover some new techniques for yourself too. Learning social emotional skills is a lifelong job.

### Topics of Discussion

We all want our children to thrive. And we want them to be happy even though we know that it's unrealistic all of the time! All children have disappointments, meltdowns, and tantrums. That is especially true for young children between the ages of two and five. Just like adults, children experience a full range of "big feelings" like anger, fear, happiness, sadness, excitement, and frustration. So it's up to adults to help them develop their social and emotional skills. That means learning about themselves and about how to get along with others. We want them to understand and control their feelings, so when they are upset, they can talk about it instead of scream. They often need our guidance so they can calm down, control their impulses, and look for solutions to difficult situations. Here's a short explanation for each of the skills and habits we'll examine in the PBS KIDS program:

- **Self Awareness:** I am me. I have feelings, likes, and dislikes.
- **Self Regulation and Impulse Control:** I manage my thoughts, my feelings, and my behaviors.
- **Self Confidence:** I am good, and I am capable.
- **Compassion and Empathy:** I know that everyone has feelings, and I am kind.
- **Friendship:** I make friends, and I get along with others.
- **Responsibility:** I take care of myself, my things, and my community.
- **Courage:** I may feel nervous or scared, but I will try my best.
- **Perseverance and Task Persistence:** I can stick with and complete a task.
- **Gratitude:** I say thank you.



# SESSION 1

## SESSION SCHEDULE

The schedule will be the same for each session. Please plan to arrive on time so you can enjoy all of the activities.

- **Arrival and welcome**
- **Group activity:** You will sing songs, watch videos, and listen to stories with your children.
- **Play and learn together:** You'll play with your child at three different stations. The time will be divided into 10-minute segments, so you can try out each activity.
- **Children's playtime/adult discussion time:** While the children enjoy supervised play, you will be discussing today's topic with one of the facilitators. You'll get a handout about the topic of the week that can help you set goals for you and your child to practice the skills you are learning.
- **Group activity:** You'll rejoin your children to participate in the final large group activity.
- **Wrap up and goodbye**



# SESSION 1: Self-Awareness

*I am me. I have feelings, likes and dislikes.*

## What Is Self-Awareness?

Self-awareness means that children begin to identify and understand who they are. They develop a sense of themselves as having certain abilities, likes, and dislikes. They begin to identify as a member of the family or culture. They also begin to understand their feelings, the positive ones like happiness and gratitude, and the more challenging ones like anger and fear. As children learn the skill of self-awareness, we may see them act in new ways, and we may hear them say things like this:

*“Grandma left. I didn’t want grandma to leave. I feel sad.”*

*“I hear loud thunder! That makes me feel scared inside.”*

## Why Is Self-Awareness Good for Children?

Preschoolers don’t yet have all the words to describe what they want, feel, know, and need. When they feel scared, sad, or angry, they may often express those emotions themselves by screaming or throwing things. We can help them name their emotions and connect what they’re feeling inside with what’s happening on the outside. In this way, practicing self-awareness leads to using words rather than acting out. Learning to explain our thinking and feelings takes time and practice. Below you’ll find strategies and resources to help your child learn self-awareness.

## Strategies to Support Self-Awareness

- Model your own self-awareness:

*“I’m feeling tired right now so I’m going to take a rest.”*

*“I was hoping to have chocolate ice cream. I’m disappointed there isn’t any left.”*

- Help children name their feelings: happy, sad, angry, disappointed, joyful, worried, concerned, curious, anxious, excited. Think of other possible feelings.

- Comment on your family’s cultural practices:

*“In our family, we speak Spanish. It’s important to us”*

*“We go to the mosque every week because we are Muslim.”*

- Point out the uniqueness of your child as well as their similarities to other people:

*“You have such good ideas! You are so creative.”*

*“Sometimes you have different ideas from your friends. Sometimes your ideas are the same.”*

*“You like strawberry ice cream, just like grandpa does.”*

*“You don’t like spicy foods. I don’t either.”*



- Describe your child's strengths:  
*"You were using your strong muscles and trying really hard."*  
*"That's funny... You're very good with words!"*
- Acknowledge both your child's current limitations and opportunities for growth:  
*"You are scared to go down the big slide, but you won't be scared after you practice."*  
*"You are frustrated that you can't draw a horse yet. But you're learning, and you'll get better."*
- Read books, watch videos, and play apps with characters that allow you to explore and practice self-awareness, such as those you used today. The list is below.

## Resources to Explore and Practice Self-Awareness

### BOOKS

- The Way I Feel, by Janan Cain
- Alma and How She Got Her Name, by Juana Martinez Neal
- Be Who You Are, by Todd Parr
- Layla's Happiness, by Mariahadessa Ekere Tallie
- Glad Monster, Sad Monster, by Ed Emberley

### VIDEOS

- Spanish Me, English Me (Sesame Street)
- Everyone Is Different (Splash and Bubbles)
- Similar, But Not Identical! (Elinor Wonders Why)
- Daniel's New Hairstyle (Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood)
- Song and Dance: Happy to Be Me (Sesame Street)
- Donkey's Bad Day (Donkey Hodie)

### DIGITAL GAME

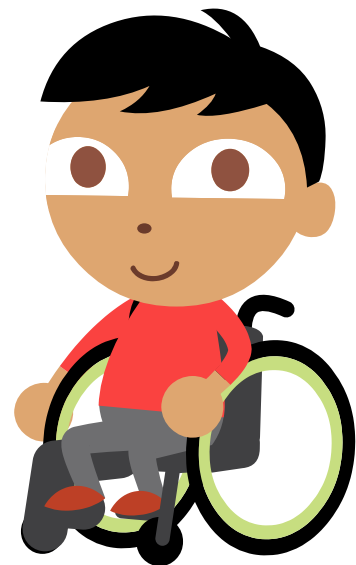
- Daniel and His Friends Storybook (Daniel Tiger)
- Guess the Feeling (Daniel Tiger)

### ACTIVITIES

- Act out pretend feelings in front of the mirror or with puppets and stuffed animals.
- Make new self-portraits with markers and paper. Compare with the self-portrait you made in the session. Talk about the differences.

## Set a Goal

Today you played with several apps and games and read books. Think of how you'll use these materials to help your child continue to practice self-awareness. Write down a goal for yourself and your children.



## Session 2: Self-regulation and Impulse Control:

*I manage my thoughts, my feelings, and my behaviors.*

Last session, we talked about self-awareness: I am me. I have feelings, likes, and dislikes. This time the topic is **Self-regulation and Impulse Control: *I manage my thoughts, my feelings, and my behaviors.***

### What Are Self-Regulation and Impulse Control?

Part of growing up is learning when, why, and how to manage a lot of information and feelings while avoiding distractions. Self-regulation and impulse control are part of Executive Function Skills. These skills are the brain’s “air traffic controller” that help us manage our behaviors and feelings while staying on task. This is hard work, even for adults, who have more language skills and patience than young children. When children experience big emotions, like anger or frustration, they can be hard to manage. Knowing self-regulation strategies and working on impulse control can help children manage their feelings and make good decisions. That might mean resisting the urge to throw the puzzle on the floor if they are frustrated. Working on impulse control can help children stop, think, and make a better choice, such as asking for help.

Self-regulation and impulse control need to be learned and practiced. Children have to learn to direct their reactions in healthy ways. During both stressful and joyful moments, children can become overwhelmed by emotions such as worry, frustration, or excitement. With your help, they can learn to express those feelings in safe and healthy ways and control the intensity of the feeling.

**As children learn the skill of self-regulation, we may see them act in new ways, and we may hear them say:**

*“I don’t like broccoli,”* instead of throwing some on the floor.

*“I want a turn playing with the red truck,”* instead of grabbing the red truck from another child.

*“I am mad because you didn’t give me the cookie,”* instead of screaming: *“I hate you!”*

*“I have to wait to ask my mom. She’s busy at the checkout counter.”*

### Why Are Self-Regulation and Impulse Control Good for Children?

Self-regulation and impulse control are necessary skills to make and retain friends, achieve personal goals, and navigate our social worlds. These skills help children make good choices, take turns, and calm themselves when they are upset. Every child is different and will be more or less distracted by different feelings and activities around them.



Temperament influences self-regulation and impulse control. Some children experience more intense feelings than others or require more time to adapt to new situations. All children benefit from compassionate and confident guidance from adults. Regardless of your child's starting place, you can help children learn to practice self-regulation and impulse control. Below you will find strategies and resources to help your child learn to develop these skills.

## Strategies to Support Self-Regulation and Impulse Control

- Model self-regulation and impulse control. Be a positive role-model by showing how you manage strong feelings: take a deep breath, take a break in a quiet spot, or draw a picture.
- Talk about feelings. Naming our feelings is a way to bring them to our awareness and helps us calm down.
  - "I am disappointed, because ..."*
  - "I see a big smile that shows me you are happy to go to grandma's house."*
- Offer two good choices:
  - "Jake, you have lots of energy, but running around the living room is not OK. Should we play in the yard or go to the park?"*
- Follow routines. Regular bedtime, eating, and play routines allow children to anticipate their day. This helps them feel safe and secure. When children lack routines, they don't know what is coming next and it's harder for them to transition to the next thing.
- If the routines change, explain clearly what will happen:
  - "Matthew, today I can't pick you up at school. Grandpa will pick you up. I'll ask your teacher to remind you."*
- Be calm and direct.
  - "I know you're angry that you can't have a cookie before dinner. That's the rule but I will help you calm down."*
- Celebrate when your child shows self-regulation and impulse control.
  - "Olivia, you waited so patiently, thank you!"*
  - "Alex, you did a good job of controlling your disappointment when you didn't get your favorite color."*
- Talk about characters in books and videos that model self-regulation and impulse control.
- Read books, watch videos, and play apps with characters that practice self-regulation and impulse control, such as those you explored today.
- Be patient because learning self-regulation and impulse control takes time and lots of practice. Expect mistakes and setbacks. When you're busy, it's hard to be patient sometimes, but remember that you're teaching your child a very important life skill.



# Resources to Practice Self-regulation and Impulse Control

## BOOKS

- “Cookies” A Frog and Toad story from Frog and Toad Together by Arnold Lobel
- My Mouth is a Volcano by Julia Cook
- Mouse Was Mad by Linda Urban
- Harriet Harris, You’ll Drive Me Wild by Mem Fox
- Sometimes I’m Bombaloo by Rachel Vail
- Katerina Gets Mad, A Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood Digital Book

## VIDEOS

- Tiny’s Calm Space (Dinosaur Train)
- Not Yet (Sesame Street)
- What Do You Do with That Mad You Feel? (Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood)
- Song and Dance: Revealing Emotions Song (Sesame Street)
- Two-Headed Monster Takes Turns (Sesame Street)
- The Waiting Game (Donkey Hodie)

## DIGITAL GAME

- The Cookie Games (Sesame Street)

## ACTIVITIES

- Calm Body, Silly Body
- Ask your child to talk about times they feel frustrated. Talk about ways they can ask for help.



## Set a Goal

Today you played with several apps and games and read books. Think of how you’ll use these materials to help your child continue to practice self-regulation and impulse control. Write down a goal for yourself and your children.



## Session 3: Self-Confidence

*I am good, and I am capable.*

Last week, we talked about self-regulation and impulse control: I manage my thinking, my feelings, and my behaviors.

This week the topic is **Self-Confidence: *I am good, and I am capable.***

### What Is Self-Confidence?

Self-confidence grows as children learn new skills and become more independent. It's the feeling associated with the phrase, "I can do it!" From taking their first baby steps to learning how to read, children gain self-confidence as they master new skills. They can't do it alone. Their self-confidence grows when adults (parents and teachers) believe in and trust that children can be successful at their own pace. That's why children must have support and patient support from adults. Self-confidence is not about doing something right the first time. Rather, it's realizing that significant effort is needed. And it's not about doing everything by yourself but knowing when to ask for help. In that way, children build the courage to continue to explore and expand their physical and intellectual abilities. As children learn the skill of self-confidence, we see them act in new ways, and we may hear them say:

*"I am learning to write my name. I don't do it well yet, but I will get better."*

*"I have an idea! Let's put this block here to make a bridge!"*

*"Can you help with this puzzle? I am having trouble doing it by myself."*

*"I'm getting better at jumping."*

### Why Is Self-Confidence Good for Children?

Self-confidence is a skill necessary to do well in school. A person with self-confidence says, *"I am capable, I can experiment, I can make mistakes, and I can move on."* Self-confidence is a learned skill. It does not happen by chance. Children have to receive the message from adults that learning new things takes work and they can do it—sometimes alone, sometimes with help. The idea of effort and practice is important, so children don't give up early, thinking that they *"are just not good at something."* Children who are self-confident know their strengths as well as their limitations. They also know how to express their opinions and ideas. Strategies to

### Support Self-Confidence

- Be a positive role model by showing self-confidence in your adult behaviors by letting your self-confidence shine through where you can, and acknowledge the fact that you sometimes need to ask for help too. Be polite and firm in requesting services. Describe your accomplishments with confident words.

- Celebrate when your child shows self-confidence:

*"Olivia, you're right, you worked so hard to remember your ABCs!"*

*"Alex, you can dress yourself now. You look so proud!"*



- Have a growth mindset. Tell your child that you believe that she can do things successfully. Let her know you trust that she is capable.  
*“You are nervous about singing at the concert. I know you will be able to do it. You have been practicing a lot. I will be there to cheer and support you.”*
- Name and discuss your child’s skill development:  
*“You’re working hard to learn how to swim. I can see you’re more confident,”*  
or *“I know you want to get even better but look at how much you’ve learned already.”*
- Teach your child good manners. Children who are polite get a positive response from other people and that increases their self-confidence.
- Avoid blanket praise, like *“good job!”* which makes children wonder what they are good at. Instead, be specific in describing accomplishments that took effort:  
*“You can be proud of yourself, you worked hard on this big puzzle by yourself!”*
- Affirm your child when he asks for physical or emotional support:  
*“Paul, good idea to ask for help finishing this puzzle! It was really hard for just one person. As you get more confident, you’ll be able to do it by yourself.”*
- Offer help when your child is struggling but don’t do it for her:  
*“Let’s work together. I hold the bottom, and you pull up the zipper. There we did it!”*
- Talk about characters in books and videos that demonstrate self-confidence.
- Name your own feelings of self-confidence:  
*“I did a nice job painting the bathroom wall! It looks beautiful.”*
- Name your collective feelings of self-confidence as a family:  
*“We worked hard to paint the bathroom together. It makes our house look really nice!”*
- When things do not go as well as you want, share your feelings of disappointment and say you will try again in the future:  
*“My cake didn’t turn out well this time. I have to try again next week. Next Time, I will add another egg.”*
- Be patient. Learning self-confidence takes time and lots of practice. Expect mistakes and setbacks. When you’re busy, it’s hard to be patient sometimes but remember that you’re teaching your child a very important life skill.

## Resources to Explore and Practice Self-Confidence

### BOOKS

- Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae
- Hair Love, by Matthew A. Cherry
- The Day You Begin by Jacqueline Woodson
- All by Myself by Mercer Mayer
- Big Enough to Help (a Daniel Tiger book) by Becky Friedman

### VIDEOS

- Gymnastic Tryouts (Arthur)
- Sandcastle Competition (Pinkalicious & Peterrific)
- Evan Lysacek: Confidence (Sesame Street)
- Tail Sock (Jelly, Ben & Pogo)
- Song and Dance: Count Me In (Sesame Street)
- The Fastest Fetcher (Donkey Hodie)

### DIGITAL GAME

- Daniel Tiger's Classroom Helpers (Daniel Tiger)

### ACTIVITIES

- Confidence Simon Says

### Set a Goal

Today you played with several apps and games and read books. Think of how you'll use these materials to help your child continue to practice self-confidence. Write down a goal for yourself and your children.



## Session 4: Compassion and Empathy:

*I know that everyone has feelings, and I am kind.*

Last week, we talked about self-confidence: I am good, and I am capable. This week, the topics are: **Compassion and Empathy: I know that everyone has feelings, and I am kind.**

### What Are Compassion and Empathy?

Compassion means that we care about others and understand their feelings. Compassion is empathy in action. When we act with compassion, we treat others with kindness and try to help others when they need support.

As children learn the skills of compassion and kindness, we see them act in new ways, and we may hear them say:

*“I see the baby is sad. I’m going to give him a hug.”*

*“My friend Celia is worried because her cat is missing. I’m worried too.”*

*“Jon is crying because I got the last cookie and he didn’t get any. I’m going to share mine with him.”*

*“My daddy says that mommy is sick today, and I have to play quietly. I have to remember to whisper until she feels better.”*

### Why Are Compassion and Empathy Important for Children?

We know that even babies sometimes cry when they hear another baby cry. They may not fully understand what’s happening, but they sense something is wrong. Sometimes we see toddlers pat another child who appears upset. Perhaps they’ve seen someone else do that or they know from experience that it feels good to be comforted. Some children find it easy to respond in this way. Others may become overwhelmed by another’s pain and ignore the person in distress. Empathy is a learned skill that gets better with practice. It helps us make and keep friends. When we understand other people and respond in a positive way to their emotional states, our relationships go more smoothly. Adults can teach all children to learn empathy. Here are some helpful strategies.

### Strategies to Support Empathy and Compassion

- Be a positive role model by showing empathy and compassion in your adult behaviors and in how you talk to your child. If your child is upset about not getting her way, you can tell her,

*“I know it’s hard when you can’t do \_\_\_\_\_. Let’s take a deep breath and decide what we can do instead.”*

- Create an atmosphere at your home where adults and children are kind to each other.



- Name your own actions that show empathy:  
*“I can tell that you need a hug. Come here, and I’ll give you one.”*
- Name and discuss your child’s skill development:  
*“You understood that the baby was crying because she wanted her mom. You patted her back to help her feel better. That’s empathy.”*  
*“It was compassionate of you to give Alex half of your cookie when he looked sad because he didn’t get one.”*
- Talk about characters in books and videos that model empathy and compassion.
- Use puppets, dolls, or pets to role play how others feel.
- Involve your child in activities to help others in your community and talk about why you are doing it.
- Teach your child to watch the behavior of other children and interpret how they might feel:  
*“Look at Pedro’s face. He is angry that you took the truck from him. You need to give it back to him—and let’s figure out a system to take turns.”*
- Be patient. Learning empathy and compassion takes time and lots of practice. Expect mistakes and setbacks. When you’re busy, it’s hard to be patient sometimes, but remember that you’re teaching your child a very important life skill.



## Resources to Practice Empathy and Compassion

### BOOKS

- Have You Filled a Bucket Today? by Carol McCloud (Author) and David Messing (Illustrator)
- Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes
- How Kind! by Mary Murphy
- Daniel Chooses to Be Kind, by Rachel Kalban
- Hug, by Jez Alborough

### VIDEOS

- Song and dance: Baile (Sesame Street)
- Who Doesn't Like Glitter (Pinkalicious & Peterrific)
- Alma on Ice (Alma's Way)
- Tank and the Herd (Dinosaur Train)
- Elmo and Abby Cooperate (Sesame Street)
- Alma's Movie Night (Alma's Way)
- Ernie's Dinosaur Daycare (Sesame Street)
- Elmo's School Friends (Sesame Street)

### DIGITAL GAME

- Sesame Street: Elmo's School Friends
- Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood: Birthday Buddy

### ACTIVITIES

- Guess the feelings
- Make a card for someone special

## Set a Goal

Today you played with several apps and games and read books. Think of how you'll use these materials to help your child continue to practice empathy and compassion. Write down a goal for yourself and your children.



## Session 5: Friendship

*I make friends, and I get along with others.*

Last week, we talked about empathy and compassion: I know that everyone has feelings, and I am kind. This week the topic is **Friendship: I make friends, and I get along with others.**

### What Is Friendship?

Good friends give us social and emotional support from childhood through adulthood. It takes practice to learn how to be a good friend—we must practice being kind, supportive, trustworthy, and listening well. These are skills children can begin to learn at an early age. As Fred Rogers said, *“One of life’s greatest joys is the comfortable give and take of a good friendship. It’s a wonderful feeling not only to have a friend, but to know how to be a friend yourself.”*

As children learn the skill of friendship, we see them act in new ways, and we may hear them say:

*“You can go first. I can wait for my turn.”*

*“Not everyone is my friend, but I get along with many people.”*

*“I have a special friend at school. Her name is Anya. We like to dance together.”*

*“I had a fight with Jake. I told him he was not my friend and he couldn’t come to my birthday party. But then we made up. Now we are friends again.”*

### Why Are Friendship Skills Good for Children?

School is a social environment. Friendship skills help children do well in school, but there are always challenges. These might include disagreeing with friends over how to play a game, learning how to effectively work in a group, and working through a miscommunication. Emotions can run high when children face social challenges—not only children’s emotions but parents’ as well! The good news is that we can teach our children concrete skills to use now and in the future, important skills such as the ability to collaborate, to cooperate, and to communicate well. With these skills, children can develop special friendships with some children and also get along with many other children and adults. Grown-ups can help all children learn friendship skills. Here are some helpful strategies.

### Strategies to Support Friendship Skills

- Be a positive role model by showing how to be a good friend in your adult behaviors.
- Talk about what friendship means to you:

*“I am so happy Joe is my friend. We help each other when we have problems!”*

*“Joe shared this book with me. I am glad he is my good friend!”*



- Talk about some of the challenges of friendship and how you resolve them:  
*“My friend Rosie and I didn’t want to watch the same movie, so we decided to take turns, just like you do with your friends. Today was her turn to pick a movie, and next week it’s mine.”*
- Help your child deal with disappointment or rejection:  
*“I know you were disappointed that Silvia didn’t want to play with you. Maybe you can ask her to play again another time.”*
- Name and discuss your child’s skill development:  
*“You are a good friend to Paula. She was sad, and you made her feel better by giving her a hug.”*
- Talk about characters in books and videos that model how to be a friend.
- Offer a positive comment when your child handles a situation well:  
*“You and Matthew figured out how to build the tower together, even though you had different ideas. It’s good you were able to work together so well!”*
- Role play social situations such as birthday parties, where tension between friends can rise. Acknowledge that your child may have feelings of jealousy or competition. Talk about how everyone has to be patient when the birthday child gets all the attention and the gifts.
- Help children learn to share:  
*“I know you both want this. I’m going to show you how to take turns. Theo, how many minutes do you need? Three? Ok. Ben, can you ask Theo, ‘Can I please have it when you are done?’... Ok, Theo, three minutes are almost up. Let’s give it to Ben.”*
- Create a welcoming home environment for your child to practice friendship. Invite other children to play at your house or with your child at a park.
- Be patient. Learning friendship skills takes time and lots of practice. You can always encourage your child to be social, but it is still a learning period. It’s ok if a three- or four-year-old still plays alongside other children rather than really playing with them. Don’t force the issue. Many young children tend to play alongside other children rather than engaging directly with them. Expect mistakes and setbacks. When you’re busy, it’s hard to be patient sometimes, but remember that you’re teaching your child a very important life skill.





## Resources to Practice Friendship Skills

### BOOKS

- Ice Cream, a story from Frog and Toad All Year by Arnold Lobel
- Yo! Yes? by Chris Raschka
- Big Al by Andrew Clements Yoshi
- Bear's New Friend by Karma Wilson
- Moo Hoo by Candace Ryan

### VIDEOS

- You Can Never Have Too Many Friends (Splash and Bubbles)
- Same Different (Sesame Street)
- Sharing Song (Sesame Street)
- Best Friends Day (Donkey Hodie)
- Floataway Squee (Jelly, Ben & Pogo)
- A Friend Just Wants to Play with You (Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood)

### DIGITAL GAME

- Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood: Daniel Tiger's Tea Party
- Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood: Guess the Feeling
- Sesame Street: Elmo's School Friends
- Donkey Hodie: Art Pals

### ACTIVITIES

- Practice your meet-and-greet skills with dolls, stuffed animals, or puppets.
- Pretend with your handprint fish puppets.

## Set a Goal

Today you played with several apps and games and read books. Think of how you'll use these materials to help your child continue to practice friendship. Write down a goal for yourself and your children.



# Session 6: Responsibility

*I take care of myself, my things, and my community.*

Last week, we talked about friendship: I make friends and I get along with others.

This week, the topic is **Responsibility: I take care of myself, my things, and my community.**

## What Is Responsibility?

Responsibility means that children begin to take care of themselves and their things.

They also start to understand the need to take care of their community. This is a big idea for young children, so it's important to relate responsibility to everyday life. As children learn the skill of responsibility, we may see them act in new ways, and we may hear them say:

*"I just went to the bathroom. I remembered to wash my hands."*

*"I finished my drawing. I need to put in my cubby before I go to play with the blocks."*

*"Mommy says I'm responsible for putting my toys away before bedtime."*

## Why Is Responsibility Good for Children?

Preschoolers can learn to be responsible for many self-care and household tasks.

They can also learn concepts like being responsible for the environment. Young children love being helpers as well as doing things on their own. They need practice and support from adults. Parents and teachers foster healthy development when they encourage children's desire for independence and provide help at the same time. Children learn to create a sense of order, concentration, self-control, and independence. The sense of responsibility grows at home, in childcare, or in preschool.

## Strategies to Support Responsibility

- Model your own practice of responsibility:

*"I'm feeling a little tired right now. But I'm going to finish folding these clothes, so they're ready for tomorrow morning."*

- Give children responsibility for helping at home: putting napkins on the table for dinner, sorting socks, cutting soft fruit, putting away toys, or feeding the cat. Remember that as children are learning the skill, they may not meet your adult standards. If the job is not done correctly, affirm the effort but resist the urge to redo it.



- Be patient and direct. If you want to teach your child to be responsible at certain times such as following through with bedtime routines, be careful not to turn the request into a question like this:

*“Will you put your pajamas on?”*

That’s an invitation to choose, and your child may choose “no.”

Instead say,

*“It’s time to put your pajamas on!”*

If your child procrastinates, say,

*“I’ll help you!”*

Your child is still learning and will be inconsistent in their interest and desire.

- Catch your child being responsible. Name the action that demonstrates she was acting responsibly:

*“Maria, thank you for putting your backpack on the hook.*

*That shows you are responsible for your things.”*

- Comment on your family’s values about responsibility:

*“In our family, we follow the schedule for recycling. We are responsible for taking care of the earth.”*

- Provide structure and routine. Set up routines that end with something fun. For example, once the tasks involved in getting ready for bed (taking a bath, putting on pajamas on, brushing teeth) are done, your child knows you will read a favorite book.

- Make it visual! If your child has three responsibilities to complete each morning—such as getting dressed, using the potty, and brushing teeth—make a picture chart for them to see. Instead of using your words to remind them, ask them to look at the chart to see if they have completed their daily tasks.

- Look for ways that you and your child can volunteer in your community. It may be a simple task, such as taking food to a shelter or a sick neighbor, cleaning up a local park, or helping seniors find a seat at a church service.

- Teach your child to be a responsible citizen. For example, when your child finishes a snack at the park, find a wastebasket and throw away the wrapper, saying:  
*“Throwing away our trash is important. We’re all responsible for keeping the park clean.”*

## Resources to Explore and Practice Responsibility

### BOOKS

- Frederick by Leo Lionni
- I Just Forgot by Mercer Mayer
- How Do Dinosaurs Clean Their Room? by Jane Yolen
- Good People Everywhere by Lynea Gillen (Author) and Kristina Swarner (Illustrator)
- What If Everybody Did That? by Ellen Javernick

### VIDEOS

- That's Cooperation! (Sesame Street)
- Floataway Squee (Jelly, Ben & Pogo)
- Looking for Litter (Alma's Way)
- The Pokey Plant Plant Day! (Elinor Wonders Why)
- Song and Dance: Together We Can Get It Done (Sesame Street)

### DIGITAL GAME

- Splash and Bubbles: Help Our Kelp
- Sesame Street: Abby and Elmo's Potty Plan
- Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood: Classroom Helpers

### ACTIVITIES

- Act out a way to be a helper for household tasks using puppets and stuffed animals.
- Create a responsibilities checklist or use the one from today's session to follow the steps of your family's routine.

### Set a Goal

Today you played with several apps and games and read books. Think of how you'll use these materials to help your child continue to practice responsibility. Write down a goal for yourself and your children:



## Session 7: Courage

*I may feel nervous or scared, but I will try my best.*

Last week we talked about responsibility: I take care of myself, my things, and my community. Today the topic is **Courage: *I may feel nervous or scared, but I will try my best.***

### What Is Courage?

Courage involves facing fear or obstacles. It's another term for bravery. Bravery doesn't mean fearlessness. It means we don't let fear hold us back from exploring new opportunities, developing our skills, and doing what is right. For a four-year-old, courage might look like meeting a new teacher, trying an activity for the first time, or talking about situations that make him feel scared. As children learn the skill of courage, we may see them act in new ways, and we may hear them say:

*"I hear loud thunder! That makes me feel scared inside. I want to hold your hand."*

*"I am worried about going down this big slide in the playground. I feel better when I go with my friend Joey. He shows me how to do it."*

*"I want to go to preschool, but I'm afraid to get dropped off and be on my own. I feel better when I remember that mommy always picks me up after story time."*

### Why Is Courage Good for Children?

Preschoolers do not yet have all the words to describe how they feel. When they feel scared, they might show it by crying or refusing to participate. This can be disappointing for grown-ups who are hoping that their child will enjoy a new experience like a music class or a ride at the amusement park. Adults help children build courage by letting them borrow their confidence. Children look to parents to find out, "Should I be scared here?" For instance, when children see a dog for the first time, they'll look up to their caregiver to assess whether the dog is dangerous. If the parent looks relaxed, it's easier for the child to approach the dog.

When kids are scared, our instinct might be to help them escape—or to avoid scary situations entirely. But that tells them, "This is too hard for you to handle!" Instead, provide encouragement. Tell your child, "*It's hard, but I know you can do it.*" Show your faith in your child's ability to cope, no matter the outcome. Learning to manage new situations and scared feelings takes time and practice. Below you will find strategies and resources to help your child learn courage.

### Strategies to Support Courage

- Model your own courage when overcoming challenges:

*"I wasn't sure I would have the courage to read the gospel out loud in church. But I learned how to do it. I'm proud of myself."*



- Pay attention to signs that your child is afraid or nervous in a situation. Offer emotional support and information that can help them work through the fear. For example, you might say, *“That thunder made you jump. Thunder is the sound that lightning makes. It’s loud, but it won’t hurt you. Let’s listen to it together.”* As the Daniel Tiger song reminds us, when we are scared, we should “see what it is, you might feel better.”
- Use art to explore courage. Talk with your child about fears she may have such as meeting grandpa’s new dog, or being left with a new babysitter. Ask your child to draw a picture about their feelings and what to do about those feelings. Write down what your child says about it.
- Comment on your family’s courage:  
*“In our family, we have the courage to try new things. Sometimes it’s hard, like that long hike in the woods we did yesterday. I’m happy we did it together.”*
- Use pretend play to overcome fears. Going to the doctor or dentist can be scary for young children. Talk in advance about what will happen. For example, before a yearly physical, use a toy doctor’s kit to explain what will happen and let them give a check-up to a doll or stuffed animal. This helps them approach situations with knowledge and courage.
- Describe your child’s courage:  
*“You were worried about going down the big slide. But you learned to do it safely by holding my hand first. Then you practiced and you did it on your own. You are courageous!”*
- Read books, watch videos, and play apps with characters that allow you to explore and practice courage, such as those you used today. The list is below.



## Resources to Explore and Practice Courage

### BOOKS

- Jabari Jumps by Gaia Cornwall
- A Chair for My Mother by Vera B. Williams
- The Thing Lou Couldn't Do by Ashley Spires
- Peep, A Little Book About Taking a Leap by Maria van Lieshout
- The Little Yellow Leaf by Carin Berger
- Daniel Visits the Doctor By Becky Friedman

### VIDEOS

- The Fireworks Are Scary (Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood)
- Alma the Artist (Alma's Way)
- Super Duper Sleepover/Mountain Climb Time (Donkey Hodie)
- Song and Dance: As Long As I'm With You (Alma's Way)
- Ziplining (Dinosaur Train)
- When Something Is New (Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood)

### DIGITAL GAME

- Super Peg + Cat Guy (Peg + Cat)
- Doctor Daniel (Daniel Tiger)
- The Cookie Games (Sesame Street)

### ACTIVITIES

- Act out ways to be brave with puppets and stuffed animals.
- Make additional courage cards with drawings of things your child can look at and think about when they need to have courage.

## Set a Goal

Today you played with several apps and games and read books. Think of how you'll use these materials to help your child continue to practice courage. Write down a goal for yourself and your children.



## Session 8: Perseverance and Task Persistence

*I can stick with and complete a task.*

Last week, we talked about courage: *I may feel nervous or scared, but I will try my best.*

This week, the topic is: **Perseverance and Task Persistence: *I can stick with and complete a task.***

### What Are Perseverance and Task Persistence?

Perseverance and task persistence are skills that help us stick with an activity, even when it is challenging. In the second session, we discussed self-regulation and impulse control, which are Executive Function Skills. Task persistence is also an Executive Function Skill that is part of the brain's "air traffic control center." We know that children have to practice new skills and tasks. Practice takes time and determination, or persistence, especially when the task is difficult and if there are other distractions. It's normal for young children to give up on a task, like a puzzle or game, when it gets difficult. The first thing to remember is that children are learning about following through with directions and routines. As children are learning the skills of perseverance and task persistence, we may hear them say:

*"I can't do this."*

*"This is hard. I want to play a different game."*

*"My blocks keep falling. I don't like building towers."*

### Why Are Perseverance and Task Persistence Good for Children?

Preschoolers may need encouragement to try new things, especially when activities are challenging. Perseverance and task persistence are important as children practice habits and skills that they will use in school and future careers. Perseverance helps children see that their abilities grow with effort. As children develop perseverance and practice task persistence, they will understand that frustration, and even failure, are part of the learning process. Adults can help children identify and practice skills they want to develop, so difficult tasks become easier. Task persistence goes hand-in-hand with impulse control and focused attention, two other Executive Function Skills. As children practice completing tasks, they will discover that they will need to resist distractions and temptations. Adults can support children to build routines and practice skills that will help them stick with and persevere to complete tasks.





## Strategies to Support Perseverance and Task Persistence

- Create a morning and bedtime routine chart. With your child, write tasks they can complete on their own or with help from an adult (e.g., put clothes on, eat breakfast, brush teeth, pack backpack). Use the chart to help your child stay on task and follow a routine.
- Ask your child to help with tasks that require sorting and routines that have multiple steps, like sorting and folding towels and adding ingredients to a recipe.
- If your child says “I can’t do it,” when an activity or task becomes challenging, encourage them to say instead *“I can’t do it yet, but I am learning.”*
- Help your child break down big, difficult tasks into smaller pieces. If you ask your child to water the plants, talk about the steps and guide them through each one.
- Children may stop doing an activity if they become discouraged or frustrated when it becomes difficult. Remind your child they can ask you or another adult for help when they become frustrated. Encourage them to try a new solution if the first one doesn’t work:  
*“Will the puzzle piece fit if you turn it around? Remember that you can ask me for help if you need it.”*
- Help your child resist distractions and temptations that might take them away from an activity or chore they are doing. You might say,  
*“I know you want to help your sister finish the fort you were building this morning. After you are done feeding the dog, you can help her.”*
- Read books, watch videos, and play apps with characters that allow you to explore and practice perseverance and task persistence, such as those you used today. Below, you’ll find a list of resources.



## Resources to Explore Perseverance and Task Persistence

### BOOKS

- What Do You Do With an Idea? by Kobi Yamada
- Emmanuel’s Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah by Laurie Ann Thompson
- I Believe I Can by Grace Byers
- Amy Wu and the Perfect Bao by Kat Zhang
- The Day You Begin by Jacqueline Woodson

### VIDEOS

- I Tried (Try Again) (Sesame Street)
- Song and Dance: Bruno Mars: Don’t Give Up (Sesame Street)
- Hoof Dancing (Donkey Hodie)
- Encouragement Flags (Donkey Hodie)
- Beatbox Big Time (Alma’s Way)

### DIGITAL GAME

- Donkey Hodie: Donkey’s Froyo Stand
- Alma’s Way: Party at Alma
- Alma’s Way: Bop or Pop!
- Donkey Hodie: Speedy Delivery

### ACTIVITIES

- Practice a new skill together like reading, writing, drawing or something else.

### Set a Goal

Today you played with several apps and games and read books. Think of how you’ll use these materials to help your child continue to practice perseverance and task persistence. Write down a goal for yourself and your children.



## Session 9: Gratitude

*I say thank you.*

Last week we talked about perseverance and task persistence: I can stick with and complete a task. This time the topic is **Gratitude: I say thank you.**

### What Is Gratitude?

Gratitude involves both feeling and expressing our thankfulness. The habit of gratitude can be nurtured in early childhood, and grown-ups can help children express thanks through their words and actions. For example, after opening a birthday gift, they may ask: “What’s next?” or cry when the toy they receive is not the exact color they had expected. Gratitude is the opposite of entitlement, and it must be developed. As children learn the skill of gratitude, we may see them act in new ways, and we may hear them say:

*“My friend Mason shared his toys with me when I was at his house. I say, ‘Thank you Mason!’*

*“Daddy worked hard to make yummy pizza for our dinner. Thank you, daddy.”*

*“I like when grandpa and grandma visit.”*

### Why Is Gratitude Good for Children?

Gratitude has many benefits. It helps us feel more positive emotions, improve our health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships. For preschoolers, gratitude means saying “thank you” to others, making a special thank-you card, and naming things that make them happy, such as a favorite toy or a visit from grandma.

Learning to be a grateful person takes time and practice. Below you will find strategies and resources to help your child learn gratitude.



## Strategies to Support Gratitude

- Express your own gratitude for the things you have:  
*“I am grateful for the things our family has, like our apartment and nice neighbors who help us.”*
- Model gratitude by saying thank you to your child:  
*“Thank you for putting your toys away so nicely. Now the living room is all ready for company.”*
- Model gratitude to people outside your family by saying thank you to your neighbor, the librarian, or the cashier at the store. Encourage your child to do the same.
- Give your child your full attention some time every day, without the distraction of phones, computers, or the TV. This focused attention reminds them that you are grateful to have them in your life. These important moments don’t have to be extraordinary. They can happen during walks in the park, in your family room, or waiting in line for your food order.
- Find time in your daily routines to express gratitude such as at mealtime or bedtime. Ask,  
*“What made you happy today?”*  
*“What are you grateful for?”*
- Read books, watch videos, and play apps with characters that allow you to explore and practice gratitude, such as those you used today. The list is below.



## Resources to Explore Gratitude

### BOOKS

- Gracias Thanks by Pat Mora
- The Thankful Book, by Todd Parr
- Bear Says Thanks by Karma Wilson (Author) and Jane Chapman (Illustrator)
- Thank You, Omu! by Oge Mora

### VIDEOS

- Love Ya, Birdies! (Nature Cat)
- Song and Dance: Musica (Sesame Street)
- Salamat Po (Jelly, Ben & Pogo)
- Dear Mr. Ratburn (Arthur)
- Thank You (Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood)

### DIGITAL GAME

- Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood: Neighbor Day
- Sesame Street: Ernie's Dinosaur Day Care
- Daniel Tiger: Make a Card
- Peg + Cat: The Big Dog Problem

### ACTIVITIES

- Make a thank-you note for someone special.
- Create a gratitude jar. You need a jar, small slips of paper, and a pen. Two or three times a week, write what you are grateful for: a visit from a friend, a sunny day, a piece of delicious fruit, a new library book. Write your own as well as the ideas your child dictates. At the end of the week, read the slips together as a family.
- Practice a new skill together like reading, writing, drawing, or something else.

## Set a Goal

Today you played with several apps and games and read books. Think of how you'll use these materials to help your child continue to practice gratitude. Write down a goal for yourself and your children.

