

Social-Emotional Learning Standards: The Foundation of Confidence

- A. **Definition:** Believing if you try to do something, you can do it. Believing you can make friends. Believing that when you go to school, everything will be OK and that you will be safe and happy. Not being afraid to make mistakes or meet new people. Not being afraid to tell someone what you think and what you want to do. Looking and sounding like you can do things and make friends.



B. Examples of Young Children's Confident Behaviour

Non-Verbal Confidence

- Talking loudly enough (but not too loud) so everyone can clearly hear you
- Speaking in a loud voice when you are asked to speak to your class
- Having good body posture
- Looking at peoples' faces when they speak to you (except where cultural expectations differ)

Work Confidence

- Doing a new puzzle without asking for help at first
- Skipping with a rope on your own even if at first you get all tangled up
- Riding your bike without the training wheels even though you still wobble and fall off sometimes
- Putting up your hand to answer a hard question
- Playing in lots of different areas of the school play area
- Writing your name by yourself even if you still make mistakes sometimes
- Using lots of different tools in the classroom
- Reading a difficult word
- Trying something hard without raising your hand for the teacher to help
- Raising your hand to ask for help when you have tried your hardest on your work and do not know what to do

Social Confidence

- Talking to your neighbour when your teacher asks you to discuss what you did over the weekend
- Going up to someone and asking if you can play
- When someone wants you to do something you don't want to do, telling them nicely what you want to do
- Going up and saying "hello" to someone new in your class
- Saying "good-bye" to mum or dad and/or nanny and knowing you will be safe and happy
- Knowing that your teacher and friends will help you if someone is being mean to you

C. Positive Habits of the Mind/Self-Talk that Helps Young Children to Be Confident

- **Accepting Myself** means thinking, "I am likeable and good at doing many things"
- **Taking Risks** means thinking "It is okay to make mistakes when learning something new."
- **Being Independent** means thinking "It is good for me to say and do what I want to do. I don't have to be bossed around by my classmates."
- **I Can Do It** means thinking that "I can do things that are hard to do."

Family information: Courage

Fear is a normal response to situations that might harm us. Fear motivates us to determine whether or not the situation really is dangerous and then, if it is, to take action to protect ourselves. Everyone feels scared at times. Courage means facing your fear and not being overwhelmed by it. We need courage if we experience misfortune. We also need courage to face some of the 'everyday' challenges in our lives such as learning a new skill or sorting out friendship issues.

◆ Key points to communicate to your child about being brave

Everyone feels scared sometimes.

Some people pretend they never feel scared but everyone does. Different things scare different people. One person might feel nervous about learning to dive but not about acting on stage. For someone else it might be the opposite.

We all need to use 'everyday courage' in our lives.

Everyday courage is shown when you try to do something that is ordinary but it still makes you feel a bit nervous such as giving a talk to the class, trying out for a part in a play, sleeping over at a friend's house or going to camp.

Weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of trying to be a hero.

A hero is someone who puts himself/herself at risk to protect the safety and wellbeing of another. It is rare for someone your age to be in a situation where heroism is required. If you are, think carefully before you act as you might not have enough skill to help the other person and you could get badly hurt or make things worse. Consider calling 000 or ask an adult to help.

You can be a hero in smaller ways (e.g. by standing up for someone who is being mistreated at school).

There's a big difference between courage and being foolhardy.

Being foolhardy means being stupid and doing a risky and scary thing (e.g. jumping from a tree branch into a river) just to show off or because people are daring you to do it. If you do something really dangerous, the best you will get are bragging rights and the worst you might get is serious injury or death.

◆ What can you do to help your child to be brave?

- Talk about times when you have felt scared and what you did to overcome your fears and be brave. Give examples of times when you tackled your fears and 'had a go' at something that was difficult. Stress how pleased you felt afterwards.
- Discuss the gains that being brave can bring (e.g. self-respect, confidence, skills).
- Look for examples of courage, heroism and foolhardiness in the media and discuss these with your child to help them to understand the differences between courage, heroism and foolhardiness.
- Encourage your child to have the courage to do what they believe is 'the right thing' even if others don't agree with them.
- Remind your child about the things that took courage for them to do when they were younger but which now seem easy. Explain that things that take courage for them to do now will seem easier and less scary as they grow older.
- Stress that throughout life there will always be new challenges that require courage.

Facing our fears and showing courage is one of the ways we become stronger.