

# BUILDING SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS IN YOUR CHILD

A child's future ability to succeed in school, in college, in the workplace, and to achieve long-term happiness will depend on their ability to develop self-management skills. Students who learn to successfully regulate their emotions, thoughts and behaviors in different situations—effectively manage stress, control impulses and motivate themselves, are well on their way to future success. For example, in school we teach students how to set and work toward personal and academic goals through development of self-discipline and organizational strategies.

Parents and families are critical partners in helping their children develop relationship skills. This resource offers guidance, resources, and activities for parents and families to help their children in developing Self-Management Skills at home.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO DISCUSS BUILDING SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- **Share your struggles with your child to teach them about resilience.** Example: "When I was your age, I was not good at sports, but I really wanted to be on the soccer team. I was not chosen the first year, but I practiced and earned a spot on the team the next year. What are some goals you want to accomplish?"
- **Talk to your child about the process it would take to reach their goals.** Example: "If you want to be a doctor, you need to go to college and to medical school before you can help patients. Maybe we should watch some movies about doctors and medicine so you can get an idea of what being a doctor is like."
- **Compliment your child when they successfully delay gratification.** Example: "I know you really wanted to watch television right after school. You were being responsible when you picked up your room first. I am proud of you for waiting."

## STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- **Party games that teach children how to regulate their emotions:** Musical Chairs, Follow The Leader, Red Rover, Mother May I, Simon Says. Other games include Jenga and Don't Break the Ice.
- **Teach self-motivation with SMART Goals:** Motivate your child to set goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART). Check in with them several times a month to monitor progress toward the goal and support them when challenges arise.



### FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

#### **Meet the Robinsons (2007, rated G)**

With the main motto being "keep moving forward", the movie teaches children that failure is an inevitable part of life. You learn and keep going! Boy genius Lewis gives up hope of retrieving his latest invention, which was stolen by Bowler Hat Guy. Suddenly, a young time-traveler named Wilbur Robinson arrives on the scene to whisk Lewis away in his time machine. The boys spend a day in the future with Wilbur's eccentric family and uncover an amazing secret.

#### **October Sky (1999, rated PG)**

John Hickam is a West Virginia coal miner who loves his job and expects his sons, Jim and Homer, to follow in his footsteps. Homer becomes interested in rocket science after seeing Sputnik 1 crossing the sky. John disapproves of his son's new interest, but Homer begins building rockets with the help of his friends and teacher. Homer set goals and created a plan to achieve them, believing rocketry and science will be his ticket to a better life.

#### **Akeelah and the Bee (2006, rated PG)**

Akeelah, an 11-year old girl living in South Los Angeles, discovers she has a talent for spelling, which she hopes will take her to the National Spelling Bee. She finds help in the form of a mysterious teacher, and along with the overwhelming support of her community, Akeelah might just have what it takes to make her dream come true.



## DISCUSSION STARTERS

# TEACHING SELF-MANAGEMENT THROUGH LITERATURE

### ELEMENTARY

#### ***My Mouth is a Volcano*** by Julia Cook

All of Louis' thoughts are very important to him. In fact, his thoughts are so important to him that when he has something to say, his tongue pushes all of his important words up against his teeth and he erupts, or interrupts others. His mouth is a volcano! Told from Louis' perspective, this story provides an entertaining way to teach children the value of controlling their impulses by respecting others, and listening and waiting for their turn to speak.

1. What does it mean when people say Louis "erupts" a lot?
2. What happens to Louis' body when other people are talking?
3. How did Louis feel when Richard and Courtney interrupted him?

#### ***Deep Breaths*** by Carol Thompson

Dolly the pig and Jack the rabbit are best friends, but even best friends do not always get along. When Dolly and Jack get into a big disagreement, they go from happy to mad, to sad, and then back to happy! Displaying a real friendship, the books sets an example of how to manage strong emotions and resolve differences.

1. How do you calm yourself down when you feel upset?
2. How can staying calm and talking to your friends about problems in a nice way, help you?
3. Do you think you can try what you learned in the book, with people other than friends, like your family or teachers?

#### ***The Very Impatient Caterpillar*** by Ross Burach

A group of caterpillars are getting ready to go through metamorphosis, but one of them is still learning about transforming. His fellow caterpillars all tell him to be patient, but the waiting is just so hard. Can he do it?

1. Can you think of a time when being patient lead to something good?
2. What were some strategies the caterpillar used to stay calm while trying to be patient?
3. What are some strategies you can use to stay calm?

### SECONDARY

#### ***For Everyone*** by Jason Reynolds

A stirring and inspirational poem for dreamers to remind everyone that no matter how many times a dreamer gets beaten down, the drive, the passion and the hope never fully extinguish—because just having the dream is the start you need if you want to get anywhere. The writer wants kids to know that dreams take time and involve struggles to achieve, but anything is possible if you put your mind to it.

1. What is a dream that you have?
2. What are some obstacles you may face on the road to achieving your dreams?
3. What are some ways that you can stay focused and work through those obstacles to achieve your dreams?

#### ***The Self-Discipline Handbook: Simple Ways to Cultivate Self-Discipline, Build Confidence, and Obtain Your Goals*** by Natalie Wise

Learn why boundaries are not bad, why humility is hard, how to build your momentum, how passion powers progress, why persistence is a virtue and patience is not optional. Learning how to be your own cheerleader and knowing your own creative cycle. Most importantly, learn how curiosity is the new vulnerability, and why, without it, self-discipline will never last. Does your child struggle with finishing projects? We all can benefit from self-discipline, yet most of us are a bit foggy on what it actually is. This handbook will teach you how to take joy in cultivating self-discipline. Learn what it is, how to get it, why we need it, how to keep it, and why we want it. The book also covers the major stumbling blocks in our way, both internally and externally. This book is designed to boost self-discipline and give the reader a healthy dose of self-confidence.

#### ***The Big Life Journal for Tweens/Teens: Teen Edition***

This journal is designed to assist teens in developing resilience and a growth mindset to grow into confident, happy adults. It helps tweens and teens discover the power of their brain and mindset to understand they are in charge of their own lives and happiness, to turn their negative self-talk into positive and empowering talk, and to practice setting goals to better overcome challenges and setbacks.