

Self-Esteem

Upper key stage 1

Key stage 2

Self-esteem is sometimes confused with arrogance. However, the mental health charity Young Minds states that:

“Self-esteem is how a person feels about themselves. There are many pressures that can affect your child's self-esteem, for example: social media, bullying, exams, family problems and abuse.

Children and young people with high self-esteem often:

- Have a positive image of themselves
- Are confident
- Can make friends easily and are not anxious with new people
- Can play in groups or on their own
- Will try and solve problems on their own, but if not able to will ask for help
- Can be proud of their achievements
- Can admit mistakes and learn from them
- Will try new things and adapt to change.

Children and young people with low self-esteem often:

- Have a negative image of themselves, they might feel bad, ugly, unlikeable or stupid
- Lack confidence
- Find it hard to make and keep friendships, and may feel victimised by others
- Feel lonely and isolated
- Tend to avoid new things and find change hard
- Can't deal well with failure.
- Tend to put themselves down and might say things like "I'm stupid" or "I can't do that"
- Are not proud of what they achieve and always think they could have done better.
- Are constantly comparing themselves to their peers in a negative way.

Most children will have dips in self-esteem as they go through different stages or challenges in life. Starting a new school, moving house, changes in the family and many other factors can affect a child's confidence, but with support from parents and other adults they usually get through this.”

Learning Intention:

- To recognise their worth as individuals by identifying positive things about themselves and their achievements, and by beginning to identify areas that needs to be strengthened.

Learning Outcome:

- To see oneself as special, to recognise strengths, abilities and personal characteristics.
- To have begun to build self-esteem and confidence by looking at their skills and achievements.
- To begin to identify personal areas that need improvement.

Resources:

- A covered box, with a mirror inside positioned glass-side up.
- Sticky notes
- Paper, pens, crayons

Teacher Introduction:

Start by saying: In other lessons we have been thinking about ways in which we are all different and special. We thought about how we are all good at different things, and today we are going to carry on with that. We are also going to think about how we can improve in those areas we are not so good at. We need to remember our group agreement about being respectful to each other, so we can talk honestly about the way we see ourselves and how we think about ourselves.

Activity 1:

Ask the children to sit in a circle.

Ask them what they think the words “special” and “unique” mean. Help them to understand that “unique” means one of a kind, something that is totally individual.

Show the children the box that contains the mirror. Tell them that inside the box they will see something special and unique. Ask them to pass the box around and one at a time to look inside it, then pass it on without saying anything. Make sure that the next child cannot see into the box before his or her turn.

When every child has looked, ask them what they saw that was special and unique.

Discuss with the children that everyone is different. We each have a different personality, different likes and dislikes, different strengths and weaknesses. Ask them to think of other ways in which we are different from each other. Scribe a list to illustrate how we are all unique and special.

Also useful for: UE, MW

Activity 2:

Ask the children to suggest the different individual strengths people can have. Split these into three columns and scribe their suggestions. Give some examples to start the conversation:

Physical	Academic	Personal
Can run really fast.	Very good at maths.	Always kind.
Can turn cartwheels.	Writes funny stories.	Reliable.

Give each child three sticky notes. On their notes ask them to write or draw three things they are good at that can fit into these three categories (one thing on each note). Ask each child to come up, read out their three things, then to stick the note into the appropriate column.

Ask the children how it felt to discuss their strengths and explore why they felt like this. (Note: some children may find discussing their strengths uncomfortable, either because they have low self-esteem or because they have been brought up to consider such conversations as boastful or arrogant. Help these children to understand that it is acceptable to be proud of the things we are good at).

Also useful for: UE, MW

Plenary:

Remind the children what they have learnt:

- Everybody is special and unique.
- We all have different strengths, although some may be similar.
- We all have areas that can be improved and strengthened.

Debriefing activity:

Ask the children to go back to the things they are good at and to reflect on these for a couple of minutes, then end the lesson.

Differentiation for SEND:

All activities are accessible to children with SEN or disabilities. However some may need extra encouragement to identify their strengths.

Some children may need support to identify realistic plans for improvement – for example a child with lower limb loss may want to improve their running, but not be able to until they have a new prosthetic which they will not receive until they have finished growing. In such cases teachers are advised to discuss the lesson with parents and carers beforehand so they can help the child to make achievable plans.