

# SEL. Be. My. Best.

## CONFIDENCE.

Social and emotional learning can help children learn the competencies and skills they need to build and effectively manage their emotions, behaviour and relationships with others.

Confidence helps us feel ready for life's experiences. When we're confident, we're more likely to move forward with people and opportunities — not back away from them. And if things don't work out at first, confidence helps us try again.

**A lack of confidence can hold people back from reaching their full potential.**

### Believing in Yourself

Has someone told you that you're smart? Funny? Kind? Artistic? A good student? A good parent? A good writer? A good athlete?

When people praise us or recognize our skills and capabilities, it can boost our confidence — *as long as we believe these good things, too.*

To feel truly confident, you need to *believe* you are capable. The best way to get that belief is through using your skills and talents — by learning and practicing.

Confidence helps us move forward to discover and develop our capabilities. When we see what we're capable of and take pride in our achievements, confidence gets even stronger.

## How to Be More Confident

**Everyone can work to gain more confidence.**

**Build a confident mindset.** When your inner voice says "I can't," retrain it to say "I can." Or you could also say, "I know I can learn (or do) this if I put my mind to it."

**Compare yourself kindly.** It's natural to compare ourselves with other people. It's a way to understand ourselves and develop the qualities we admire. But if comparisons often leave you feeling bad about yourself, it's a sign to work on your confidence and self-esteem.

**Shake off self-doubt.** When we doubt our abilities, we feel inferior, unworthy, or unprepared. That can make us avoid people and situations we might enjoy and grow from.

**Take a safe risk.** Sign up for a school committee, volunteer to help with a project or bake sale, or try out for a team or talent show. Raise your hand in class more often. Talk to that cute kid in your science class.

**Challenge yourself to do something that's just beyond your normal comfort zone.** Pick something you'd like to do if only you had more confidence. Give yourself a little push and do it. Now that you've done that, pick something else to try — and keep repeating this same process. Confidence grows with every step forward.



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**Know your talents and help them shine.** We're taught to work hard to improve our weaknesses. Sometimes that's important, like bringing up a bad grade. But don't let working on a weakness prevent you from getting even better at the things you're good at.

**Do your homework.** Study. Do assignments. Prepare for class, tests, and quizzes. Why? If you've been keeping on top of class work all along, you'll feel more confident in tests and finals. The best defence against test anxiety and school stress is to keep up and do the work steadily.

**Dare to be the real you.** Let others see you for who you are — mistakes, insecurities, and all. Insecurities are easier to move past when we don't feel like we have to hide them. Embrace your quirks instead of trying to be like someone else or acting in a way that's not true to you. It takes courage and confidence to be real. But the more real we are, the more self-confident we become. Confidence builds self-esteem.

**In class.** Use feedback from many sources to consolidate your strengths and prioritise future learning opportunities and options. Seek opportunities to expand your knowledge and skills and support others.

**Practice self-care.**

Do something positive for your mind, body, and spirit and you'll naturally feel more confident as a result. Engage in meditation, get adequate amounts of sleep, eat well and exercise.

Confidence levels go up and down for all of us, even the most confident-seeming people. If something shakes your confidence, show yourself some understanding. Don't criticize yourself. Learn from what happened, think about what you could have done differently, and remember it for next time. Talk about what happened with someone who cares. Then remind yourself of your strengths and the things you've achieved.

## Benefits of confidence

Being confident in yourself just feels good. That said, having self-confidence can also bring many additional benefits at home, at work, and within your relationships. Some positive effects of self-confidence:

**Better performance:** Rather than waste time and energy worrying that you aren't good enough, you can devote your energy to your efforts. Ultimately, you'll perform better when you feel confident.<sup>14</sup>

**Healthier relationships:** Having self-confidence not only impacts how you feel about yourself, but it helps you better understand and love others. It also gives you the strength to walk away from a relationship if you're not getting what you want or deserve.

**Openness to try new things:** When you believe in yourself, you're more willing to try new things. Whether you apply for a promotion or sign up for a cooking class, putting yourself out there is a lot easier when you have confidence in yourself and your abilities.



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## Confident People,

Celebrate other people's success  
Stay open-minded  
Think positively  
Willing to take risks  
Able to laugh at themselves

Decisive  
Always learning and growing  
Admit mistakes  
Accept responsibility

## How Can We Help?

As adults, we can foster confidence in children by helping them feel competent, valued, and independent. It's also important to teach social and problem-solving skills so kids feel prepared to navigate the situations life brings.

Transforming Negative Self-talk activity: Learning to recognise what triggers negative self-talk and how to reframe these thoughts positively is a powerful way to overcome these thoughts and boost confidence. Negative self-talk is often at the root of low self-esteem. Learning to recognize what triggers negative self-talk and how to reframe these thoughts positively is a powerful way to overcome these thoughts and boost confidence.

When students find themselves slipping into negative self-talk, they can work to replace them with more empowering thoughts.

Practice with students to write a positive statement to replace a negative statement and use a growth mindset statement, such as, "I can improve my grades and get better at school if I study more and ask for help when I need it."

## AFFIRMATIONS

Children need confidence to thrive. As they grow and develop new skills, believing in themselves and their ability to learn is crucial.

Affirmations are a simple and effective way to boost confidence in children. Studies link affirmations to a whole host of health benefits too, from lowered stress to an improved outlook on life and fostering a sense of belonging in school.

Affirmations are statements that encourage and motivate. They can come from others "You are capable of great things" or from ourselves "I can do anything I set out to accomplish".

Self-affirmations are especially empowering for children. Children can generate their own positive emotions rather than relying on others to boost their self-esteem. Think of self-affirmations as acts of love children can send to themselves throughout the day — and in especially tricky moments.



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**PLEASE TALK TO YOU'RE YOUR PERSON ABOUT USING STATEMENTS LIKE THESE.**

### **I Can Do Hard Things**

The ability to face and overcome obstacles is crucial to self-confidence and developing a growth mindset. This affirmation reminds kids they can tackle whatever comes their way.

### **Mistakes Help Me Learn**

Rather than something to avoid, mistakes and even failure are where real learning happens. This powerful phrase reminds your child that mistakes are a natural step in the process.

### **I Can Try New Things**

Most children are hesitant to try (and possibly fail) something new or unfamiliar. Your child can recall all the many “firsts” they have experienced, and feel confident to try the next new thing.

### **I Speak With Kindness**

Children (and adults) often need reminders about the power of words. We cannot control how others speak, but we can always choose words that are kind and helpful — both to ourselves and others.

### **I Was Born To Learn**

A growth mindset means recognizing that everyone can grow and develop. No one is born knowing how to walk, write, or do most anything. But with time and effort, anyone can learn.

### **I Try Different Strategies Until I Get It**

Problem-solving skills are key in developing self-confidence. This affirmation encourages your child to keep trying and never give up.

### **My Brain Is a Muscle — It Gets Stronger With Practice**

Just as muscles strengthen from being challenged, the brain grows from the struggle. The more we practice and work hard, the greater our growth.

### **I Am Always Growing and Learning**

For the child who often feels “stuck” or struggles to learn new things, reminders that growth and development are always happening can be particularly powerful.

### **I Am Grateful For Who I Am**

Gratitude requires shifting to a new perspective — from seeing what’s wrong to seeing what’s right. This affirmation is a reminder to focus on what’s going well, and for your child to notice the strengths and abilities they already have.

### **I Choose to Focus On What I Can Control**

When things go wrong, your child must focus on the aspects they can control: their words, reactions, and behaviour. Affirming they can choose what to focus on reduces anxiety about the things they cannot change.

### **I Am Brave**

Children often think of brave as the opposite of scared. But bravery only exists when your child **is** scared — and faces it! Affirmations about being brave in the face of worries and obstacles will help even the most anxious of children move forward with confidence.



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### **I Can Ask For Help When I Need It**

Far from weakness, asking for help when needed is an effective (and brave) practice. While it's important to also try things on our own, knowing there are others to support us in difficult moments is a confidence booster.

### **I Can Feel All My Feelings**

Feelings aren't good or bad, they just are. When children allow themselves to feel and experience whatever arises, they gain confidence in their ability to handle every emotion.

### **I Have Creative Ideas**

Creativity can take many forms — from writing and art to thinking and problem-solving. When children see their ideas as creative, they gain the freedom to explore and try new things.

### **I Am Resilient**

Resilience means bouncing back from challenges big and small. Affirming that kids have the power to pick themselves up and start again is a confidence builder.

### **I Am A Helper**

Repeating affirmations about helping others connect children to their families and communities. Seeing themselves as useful to others brings a sense of confidence and control.

### **I Believe In My Dreams**

A growth mindset means having big dreams and reaching for goals. This affirmation reminds kids to believe in the power of their minds, and have the confidence to make their dreams a reality through hard work.

### **I Have Everything I Need To Make Today a Great Day**

Many kids engage in negative thinking. When one scenario goes wrong, it sets the stage for a bad day. This affirmation prompts your child to remember that any day can be turned around with a positive attitude.

### **I Am Grateful For Another Day To Make a Difference**

Opportunities to make a difference are limited only by our imagination. From a daily good deed, like setting the table, to starting a community garden, each morning presents a new opportunity for your child to make a positive difference in the world.

### **I Follow My Heart**

Listening to their heart is critical to a child's confidence. This affirmation reminds them to tune in and be mindful of their inner voice — wherever it leads.

### **I Am a Good Friend**

To make a good friend, children must be good friends. This affirmation supports your child in developing the qualities they'd like to see in others and is especially useful for those with social anxiety or trouble making friends.

### **I Get Better Every Single Day**

Each day, we build on the effort and learning of previous days. Each day, we grow from our mistakes and hard work.



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**Today I Will Face My Fears**

When we hide from worries and fears, they only get stronger. Affirmations about facing what frightens us — from a math test to a playdate — help us regain control.

**I Choose To Compare Myself To Myself**

Comparing themselves to others is normal for kids. But it often leads to feeling “less than” and lacking in confidence. This affirmation notes the difference between being THE best and being THEIR best.

**I Am Enough**

It’s common for children (and adults) to feel they are lacking in some way. When we declare that we are enough exactly as we are, amazing things happen — self-acceptance, self-love, and the confidence to soar.

Yours sincerely,



**Daniel Jans and Hannah Keating**

Interim Assistant Principals' Student Wellbeing



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