

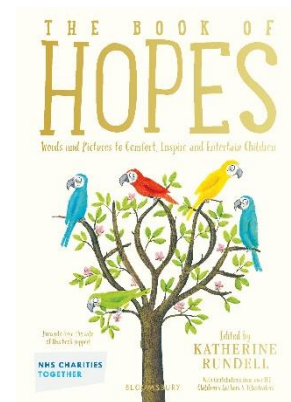
Self-efficacy: wellbeing and literacy activities

Key Stage 2

Introduction

Self-efficacy is the belief that our actions have an effect on the world around us, that we can make a difference and have strengths we can draw on in times of challenge. It is also closely related to a growth mindset and resilience. By exploring the theme of self-efficacy through these literacy activities, you can help children to build coping mechanisms for when times are tough. You can use these teacher notes in partnership with the PowerPoint presentation or as inspiration to plan your own lessons.

The activities are linked to poems and stories from *The Book of Hopes* (published by Bloomsbury), which you can access at the National Literacy Trust Website: literacytrust.org.uk/bookofhopes.



Recovery Curriculum links

The activities in this resource link to the following Recovery Curriculum 'Levers' (Barry Carpenter, 2020) evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum/#mentalhealth

Lever 1 Relationships: Help pupils connect with their peers by encouraging them to share thoughts and feelings that they experienced during lockdown. Playing the counting game relies on teamwork and partnership, and will allow children to work together to re-forge connections.

Lever 2 Community: Re-establish your classroom community by reading to the children. Collecting poems and putting them together in a display will help your pupils feel unified with the whole class even if they are working in pods or bubbles.

Lever 5 Space: It's important to allow children time to work on their own creative activities that won't be assessed, such as writing poems. Reflecting on their feelings as they are engaged in the task will provide a sense of space for children to find their voice, settle in to the school environment and encourage self-expression.



Self-belief – discussion

Self-efficacy can be a tricky concept for young children to grasp, so you may prefer to use the term “self-belief” instead. Talk to your pupils about what this means and why it’s important. You can use the questions below and in the PowerPoint as a starting point.

Starter questions

What does “self-belief” mean?

Why is it important to believe in ourselves?

Has there been a time during lockdown when you felt helpless or like you couldn’t change anything? What did you do?

How do you help yourself feel better when you are sad? For example, talking to yourself, listening to music, doing a fun activity, cuddling with a favourite toy.

Has there ever been a time when you have found something very difficult and given up?

Have you ever found something very difficult but tried it anyway? How did that feel?

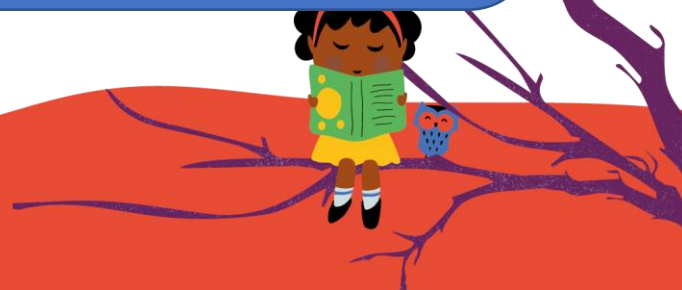
Key points

Self-belief means that we know we have the tools we need to get through a difficult time. When something feels out of our control, it’s helpful to remember the things we can affect and are good at. This makes us feel better.

It is natural to have feelings of helplessness, especially during a difficult time or transition. But what we say and do matters, and our actions can make a difference. Self-belief will help us to remember that.

It’s a good idea to remember the things that make us feel better when we are sad. We can use these as tools during difficult times.

Sometimes we might feel like we can’t do something, but it’s important to believe in ourselves and try anyway. We might have to try something lots of times before we can do it successfully. This can feel frustrating, but we are all learning and getting better every day, and we should feel proud of ourselves for trying.



Me by Swapna Haddow

Read the poem on page 291 of *The Book of Hopes* to the children.

Discussion about the poem

Talk to the children about their reaction to the poem. You can use the questions below and in the PowerPoint as a starting point.

What was the poem about?

Are there any parts you liked?

Were there any pictures in your mind as you heard the poem?

How does the poem make you feel? How has the poet made you feel that way?

Can you name some of the things the poet loves about herself?

Is it always easy to love yourself? Why not?

What does the poet do when she finds it harder to love herself?

Can you spot any poetic techniques used in this poem? You could lead this into a discussion about enjambment, use of capital letters, repetition, spacing on the page, and so on.

What do you love about yourself? Tell the children they don't have to answer right away, they can just think it to themselves.



Writing your own “me poems”

Self-love is an important part of self-belief and self-efficacy. Appreciating ourselves for who we are and acknowledging all that we can do is empowering. By writing poems about self-love the children can explore their own identities and what they are capable of.

Step one

Ask each child to write down a list of things that they love about themselves. What makes them unique? Encourage them to think about their bodies and their brains, like in the poem. We have included some prompts below and in the attached PowerPoint to get them started.

Do you have a special skill?

What can your body do?

What is your mind really good at?

What do you love about your face?

What do other people say they love about you?

What are you good at?

Step two

Can they think of more exciting expressive ways to describe these things, like in the poem? Draw attention to the poet’s use of adjectives like “stretchy”, “wobbly”, “wiggly”, “thinky”.

Step three

Can they now weave all these wonderful things into a poem that starts with “I love me”? It doesn’t have to be a list shaped poem. They could focus on one particular thing that they love about themselves or on lots of different things!

Share the poems with the class and remind the children that, like the poet says in the poem, when we feel sad it can be difficult to remember how wonderful and unique we are. But that is when it is most important to remind ourselves of all the wonderful things we can do.



The Demon Goal Keeper by Alex Wheatle

Read the poem on page 257 of *The Book of Hopes* to the children.

Discussion about the poem

Talk to the children about their reaction to the poem. You can use the questions below and in the PowerPoint as a starting point.

What was the poem about?

Were there any parts you liked?

Are there any words you don't understand? Maybe football fans in the class can translate!

How did the person in the poem feel at the beginning of the poem? Why?

What did they want to do when they went to see the manager?

What happened next? What did they do every night after school?

How did they feel during the semi-final game? Did they think they would win?

How did they feel at the end of the poem?

What do you think happens next? Is the semi-final game the last one?

Even though the person in the poem felt like they had failed and wanted to give up, they kept going. They practised really hard and made an improvement to their skills. You can link this poem to a growth mindset.

The person in the poem felt helpless and sad at the beginning, but they used their own actions and behaviour to change the situation. They took control by deciding to practice and practice. Their actions made a big difference and meant the team won the semi-finals.

When we feel helpless and like we can't control a difficult situation, it can help to think again and look for what we *can* control in our own reactions. What we say and do matters.

The big game in the poem was the semi-finals, but the finals are yet to come! talk to the children about what might happen after the end of the poem, whether they think the team will win the finals too, and why.



Counting game

Failure can feel difficult to reckon with, but if we have inner reserves of self-belief to draw on we feel strong enough to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off and try again, just like the main character in the poem. Counting to three sounds easy; it's something we have been able to do since we were very little. But this game will keep you on your toes!

Step one

Put the children in pairs and ask them to count to three together, taking it in turns to say a number. Give them a few moments to try it out several times.

Child A: 'one'

Child B: 'two'

Child A: 'three'

Child B: 'one'

Child A: 'two' Etc.

Ask them whether the task was easy. It might be harder than they expected. Ask them to pick up the pace and count as quickly as possible. There should be lots of mistakes and laughter, maybe some frustration. Tell them if they aren't making mistakes, they aren't going fast enough!

Step two

This time, whenever they make a mistake, rather than get frustrated they should instead take an extravagant bow and applaud themselves, before picking straight up and starting again. How did that feel? Some of the children might find they felt better at "failing" and actually looked forward to it.

Step three

After a while, you might find they are getting very good at this game and can go very fast. Increase the challenge by asking them to replace the "one" with a clap.

To increase the difficulty even further, you can replace the two and the three with a stamp, an animal noise, or a funny sound that the children choose themselves. You could even introduce a rule that it has to be different animal noise each time to make it really challenging!

Step four

You can finish by having a "count-off". Decide which rules you are going to play (they might be too good at the original game by now!) Each pair has to stop when they make a mistake and sit down. The last pair standing is given a huge round of applause from the class and can take a triumphant bow.

Ask the children what made the game easier and what made it fun? Point out that even in a short space of time they became masters of the game just by practising it a few times. Acknowledging their mistakes then moving on and trying again is an approach they can apply to other areas of their life. You can link this to the growth mindset, if your school uses that approach.

