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# Teaching Self-Management Skills: 5 Strategies to Create an Effective Plan

*Positive Action Staff* • **SEL Articles**

Self-management is the ability to manage stress and impulsivity while motivating oneself to meet a specific goal.

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Social-emotional learning competencies focus on teaching students the skills to navigate their lives. Character education teaches confidence, social-emotional intelligence, and self-awareness, among other life-long strengths. Self-management, however, may be one of the most critical skills that students take from SEL.

Learning to self-manage teaches students to have a growth mindset. Failure happens to everyone, but we learn from it and try again.

To teach self-management skills to students, you need a reliable and proven plan.

## What is a Self-Management Plan?

Teaching self-management skills for students has been proven to improve academic performance, productivity, time-on-task, and decrease problem behavior.

Ideally, self-management strategies for students start before problem behaviors occur. However, they can replace disruptive behaviors by substituting them with more desirable conduct.

Try using these self-management tools in your classroom.

1. **Time Management Logs.** These logs are a place for students to track and manage their time. The log can span the length of a single assignment, an entire day, or a week, whatever is appropriate. For younger students, the goal of their self-management plan may be to complete a worksheet without interrupting other students. For older students, they may set a goal to gather insight into their working habits and improve them.

2. **Checklists and Rubrics.** The act of checking boxes on a to-do list can be exciting for students. Each checkmark is a goal completed toward a larger objective.

It's important that both student and teacher clearly understand the objective, and that you have manageable steps to get there.

3. **Rating Scales.** A rating scale allows students to rate how well they accomplished a specific goal. For example, a student sets a goal to complete an assignment within a stated period. The teacher could mark off ten-minute intervals or play a beep tape. When cued, the student records whether they succeeded in focusing on their assignment during that interval. They reward themselves with a star or smiley face if they succeeded and leave their record blank if they didn't. At the end of the class, students see how many stars or smiles they've earned, allowing them to rate their efforts.

4. **Contracts or Agreements.** While contracts are ideal for older students, they can be used for young learners as well. Agreements can be a list of rules or ideal behaviors and can be individually based, team-based, or class-based. Students can then evaluate how well they kept the terms of the agreement at the end of it. Ensure that students get involved in setting the rules or behaviors so they feel more engaged in sticking to them.

5. **Behavior Report Cards.** These report cards should have a place for both students and teachers to grade their behavior. Younger students may earn grades on teaching sessions, while older students may be able to handle a grade for the entire day.

## How Positive Action Can Help

Positive Action has created a research-based SEL curriculum that focuses on self-management as an underlying objective for all lessons. We also have units that focus on self-management.

To learn more about our programs, you can also reach out to us via chat, email, or call us at (800) 345-2974. You can also join us for a 15-minute webinar.

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