

Healthy Living

Sense of self



“A sense of self comes from the experience of being in the mind of others, feeling valued and understood. If children do not feel understood this can affect feelings of intimacy, trust, and attachment later in life.”

[Sense of self - Help for early years providers - GOV.UK \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/education/guidance/sense-of-self-help-for-early-years-providers)

Task 1

Watch the following video: [Sense of self](#)

Discuss with a partner:

- Why do you think children having a sense of self so important?
- How do you think this links to their emotional well-being?
- How do you think a strong sense of self is related to self-belief?
- How do you currently support children in developing their sense of self?
- Can you think of any examples of where this has been evident in practice?

Task 2

Using the prompts below, reflect on your existing curriculum. How do you support children to explore...

- The way they look.
- Feelings they have.
- How they are similar to others?
- Things they are good at.
- Things they struggle with or find difficult.
- Things they enjoy.
- How they are different to others?
- Things that are special to them.
- Things that make them feel proud.

Think about where you have seen these things happen. What did you do? What did the child do? Through this reflective task, have you identified any missed opportunities to enable children to develop their confidence, their identity, a sense of pride?

Be sure to celebrate what you already do and make a note/action for anything more you could be doing. Consider, how would you answer these questions as adults? Team meeting activity idea!

Task 3

There are some common practices that are great for promoting a sense of self – if implemented in a meaningful way.

- All about me – When a child joins your provision and you gather information through communication with parents, observations of the child and getting to know one another activities.
- Settling in procedures – Adapted to the needs of the child. Knowing whether or not a familiar comforter helps? Understanding what soothes the child if they become upset? How you make them feel secure and safe with you.
- ‘Show and tell’, ‘sharing time’ or ‘meaning moments’ – offering time for children to showcase an item, an experience or a memory with their peers.
- Learning journeys – scrap books or a day in the life diary of the children, for you to share with one another, parent’s/carers, their peers.

As a group, discuss how these practices are or could be embedded. Do practitioners recognise the impact of these opportunities? These are just a few examples. Can you think of more?

“Children should develop a positive sense of themselves. Staff can provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities, for example through allowing children to take risks on an obstacle course, mixing colours, talking about their experiences, and learning.”

Action for children – Fundamental British Values.