SKILL TREE™

3: The Magic of Self-Management

K–6

A K–6 Lesson on Responsibility, Emotional Control, and Personal Growth Through Daily Habits

Introduction for the Facilitator

This lesson helps K–6 students explore and strengthen the professional skill of **self-management**, defined as the ability to control our actions, emotions, and focus, even when things feel hard or exciting. It's a skill that touches every part of a student's day, from lining up for lunch, to completing a project, to calming down after a big feeling.

When students learn how to manage their emotions, energy, and behaviors in healthy ways, they begin to build a **personal competitive advantage** that will serve them across school, friendships, and their future workplace. This is not about being perfect. It's about **taking small, consistent steps** every day to grow into someone who can handle challenges and make decisions that reflect their values and goals.

This lesson is designed for all K–6 grade levels and includes:

- **A Social Story to build empathy and understanding**
- **8 Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions**
- **8 flexible Journal Prompts (draw or write)**
- **10 simple and fun classroom Activities that support the skill**
- **A printable reflection Worksheet for student reinforcement**

The **professional skill** of self-management is one that makes every other skill possible. Let's help students discover how powerful it is to lead themselves.

CAREER TREE®

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Social Story: *Zoe's Turning Point*

Zoe was known for her energy. She loved games, group time, and any activity that let her move. But sometimes, when Zoe got too excited or frustrated, things didn't go so well. Like last Tuesday in art class. Zoe was so excited to use the paints that she rushed, spilled water on someone's project, and then felt too embarrassed to say sorry.

Later, Zoe sat quietly with her teacher, Ms. Alvarez. "I know how much you love creating," Ms. Alvarez said gently. "Self-management isn't about being less energetic. It's about choosing when to pause, think, and take the next best step."

Zoe thought about that. The next day, before math group started, she took three deep breaths. When the group got loud, Zoe raised her hand and reminded her friends to work together. And at recess, when she almost jumped ahead in line, she caught herself and stepped back.

Her friends noticed. So did her teacher. And most of all, **Zoe noticed**. She felt proud...not because she was being told what to do, but because she was leading herself.

Every small choice helped Zoe feel more in control, more focused, and more like the person she wanted to be. She realized that managing herself was helping her grow her own superpower: **the ability to guide her energy, emotions, and decisions toward her dreams**. This became part of Zoe's **personal competitive advantage** to help her live the **lifestyle** she wanted!

Group Discussion Questions

1. **What does it mean to manage your own behavior, even when no one is watching?**
   Follow-up: Can you think of a time you did this well?
2. **What are some big feelings you experience during the day?**
   Follow-up: What helps you stay calm when those feelings happen?
3. **What helps you stay focused when something feels boring or hard?**
   Follow-up: How do small steps help you finish big things?
4. **Have you ever made a quick choice you wished you could take back?**
   Follow-up: What would you do differently next time?
5. **What helps you stay in control of your body when you're excited?**
   Follow-up: How can that help in class or on the playground?
6. **How do you feel when you keep a promise or meet a goal?**
   Follow-up: What's something you want to work on managing better?
7. **Why is it important to notice our feelings without letting them control us?**
   Follow-up: What's one thing you can do when a big feeling shows up?
8. **How can self-management help you reach a lifestyle goal you care about?**
   Follow-up: What's one step you can take today toward that goal?

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Journal Prompts

(Students can write or draw their answers based on age and ability.)

1. **Draw or write about a time when you stayed calm, even if it was hard.**
2. **What does self-management mean to you? Show or describe what it looks like**.
3. **What is one thing that helps you stay in control of your emotions or body?**
4. **Draw or write about a moment when you made a good decision. What helped?**
5. **Describe or draw a situation where you could practice self-management better.**
6. **What is one small goal you want to manage this week? Why is it important?**
7. **Draw or write about how it feels to be in charge of your own choices.**
8. **What is one way self-management helps you build your personal competitive advantage?**

Activities

1. **Self-Manager Badge**
   Students design a personal "Self-Manager" badge with drawings or words that represent how they lead themselves.
2. **Freeze and Breathe**
   Play music and let students dance. When the music stops, everyone freezes and takes three deep breaths before resuming.
3. **Emotion Match-Up**
   Provide emotion cards and coping strategy cards. Students match feelings like "frustrated" with strategies like "count to 10."
4. **Goal of the Day Chart**
   Each morning, students set one small goal they want to manage (e.g., raising hand, staying calm, not interrupting others). Reflect at day's end.
5. **Reflection Jar**
   At the end of the day, students draw a card from a jar with reflection prompts like "What did I manage well today?"
6. **Mindful Walk**
   Take a slow, quiet walk around the room or school grounds. Students focus on breathing and noticing their surroundings.
7. **Self-Management Scenarios**
   Role-play simple situations (e.g., losing a game, waiting in line) and discuss how to respond with self-management.
8. **Progress Ladder**
   Students build a ladder drawing showing the "rungs" of their progress on one self-management goal over the week.
9. **Mirror Motivation**
   Provide mirrors and let students give themselves a kind, encouraging statement: "I am learning to manage myself."
10. **Daily Check-In Board**
    A space where students place a sticky note under "Calm," "Wiggly," "Frustrated," or "Focused" and reflect with a strategy.

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My Self-Management Power

Name:

Helpful Words:

- **Self-Management** = being in control of my feelings and actions when things are super hard or super exciting
- **Lifestyle Goal** = the kind of life I want to live
- **Personal Competitive Advantage** = my special strengths and habits that help me grow

Directions:
Write or draw your answers to reflect on how you manage yourself. You can use words, pictures, or both!

Use the back of this sheet if you need more space.

1. **Today, I managed my:**
   ❑ Focus ❑ Emotions ❑ Energy ❑ Choices ❑ Other:

2. **One moment I felt proud of today was:**

3. **A strategy that helps me stay in control is:**

4. **This is how I look/feel when I'm managing myself well:**

5. **I want to grow my personal competitive advantage by managing my:**

6. **One lifestyle goal I care about is:**

7. **Managing myself can help me reach it by:**

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