



# District Student Services

January 2022



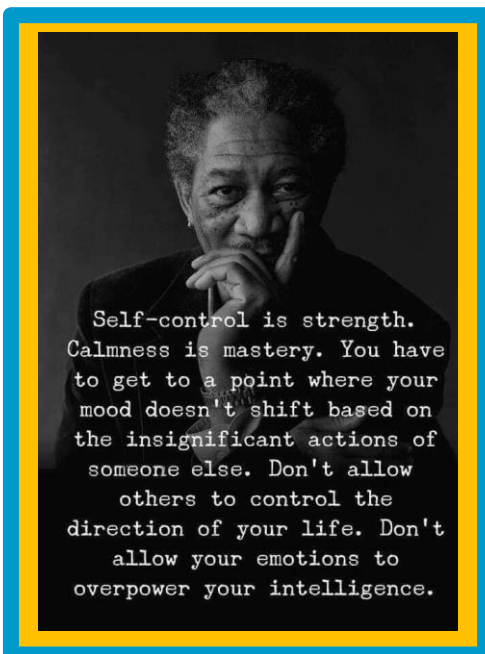
## Self-Control

### teaching students about their greatest inner strength

Self-control is the ability to override an impulse in order to respond appropriately. It is inner dialogue that says, "I do not need cheesecake, I do need carrots". Self-control is a thinking skill that helps students learn to control their feelings and behaviors in order to make good decisions, while aiding in reducing impulsive actions and dealing effectively with frustration. Self-control means being able to resist immediate temptations and avoid acting on impulse in order to achieve more important goals, such as learning or being kind. When students have better self-control, they do better in school and get along better with others. Young children with poor self-regulation skills tend to make less academic progress (McClelland et al 2007; Welsh et al 2010; McClelland et al 2014). Throughout school, they are more likely to experience anxiety, depression, and aggressive behavior problems (Martel et al 2007; Eisenbert et al 2010; Raajimakers et al 2008; Ellis et al 2009). In the long run, kids with poor self-control are at higher risk of poor health outcomes, like obesity and drug dependency. (SAMHSA, 2020) (APA, 2022)

### 12 Tips for Teaching Self-Control

- Help kids avoid temptation, out of sight, out of mind** – one of the most important tools of maintaining self-control is to change the environment. Teach students how to identify their [temptations](#) and put those items aside, favorite toy, electronic device, etc.
- Create an environment where self-control is consistently rewarded** - Children that practice self-control in their early years, perform better on achievement tests, were more likely to finish college, and less likely to develop substance abuse problems. [Marshmallow test](#) & the Cookie Monster [Cookie Test](#)
- Support young children with timely reminders** – Reminding a student before a task about the expectations will more likely allow the child to check their impulses.
- Play games that help practice self-control** – Anytime ask students to play by the rules, we are asking them to practice self-control. [Games](#) help children practice [impulses](#) and [self-regulation](#).
- Give students a break** – Students will thrive when we allow them downtime – breaks from following. Provide students with smaller tasks to complete followed by [brain breaks](#).
- Turn must-do tasks into "want to" tasks** – Students need to find [tasks](#) and subjects interesting and [fun](#). Without this element, they experience self-control fatigue. By shifting our mindset to include more enjoyable [activities](#) and assignments, students will want to do the activity.
- Instill the right mindset for tackling challenges and learning from failure** – Shifting from "[you are smart](#)" and "I am disappointed in you" allows students to develop resiliency and determination to receive better feedback. Saying "[Can you think of another way to try it?](#)" or "[I like how you wrote these first three sentences, can you give me three more?](#)" is encouraging and lends for more collaboration and response.
- Help children develop their attention and working memory skills** – Following-through tasks can be difficult especially if your working memory is low. [Working memory](#) is the mental workspace or notepad in your brain that allows you to store information quickly while moving from one task to the next. Young children or children with disabilities do not perform as well as adults on working memory tasks, however, here are some [tips](#) to help.
- Be an "empathy" coach** - Students benefit when the adults in their lives show [empathy](#) and learn how to cope with their struggles.
- Encourage children to practice planning** – Planning is an important component of self-discipline. People are more likely to succeed when they think about the obstacles they face, and come up with specific steps about when, where, and how they will take action. Using a planner and using positive self-talk allow students to work out their tasks in an effective manner.
- Take stock of the way you handle misbehavior** – We have seen attention seeking behaviors. These [behavior strategies](#) can assist student with self-control concerns.
- Remember that kids need autonomy** – Generally, students want to cooperate with rules and requests of their authority figures. Students will respond with open defiance, sneak behind our backs, or exhibit poor decision making when they believe the adults in their lives have over-reacted or lost control. Educators can help students build autonomy using these [tips](#). (APA, 2022)



### Additional Resources

Resource	Description	Grade Level	Educator	Family
<a href="#">Self-Regulation</a>	Lesson plan for secondary students on self-regulation/control	6-12	X	
<a href="#">Self-Regulation Picture Books</a>	Self-regulation books for elementary students	PK-5	X	X
<a href="#">Disruptive Behavior Problems</a>	12 evidence-based tips for handling aggression, defiance, and acting out	ALL	X	X

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Providing support and creating opportunities through targeted services for students and families while maximizing student potential and creating a safe, positive learning environment.

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