

## Self-Awareness

**Self-awareness** is a key skill that helps your child to problem solve and become a more independent individual.

### What is self-awareness?

“Self-awareness is awareness of one’s own strengths and limitations. This knowledge can help inform decisions that help individuals gain control over their own lives. This knowledge is particularly helpful in making decisions and formulating goals based on personal strengths and advocating for accommodations based on personal limitations” (Collins & Wolter, 2018).

### How can we promote self-awareness?

Self-reflection is a powerful way to promote self-awareness. The following self-reflection exercises may be used as tools to help develop self-awareness.

- Have a conversation
  - Openly discuss personal strengths and challenges. You can model self-awareness by discussing your own strengths and challenges. Then have your child identify what they see as personal strengths, and what they see as personal challenges. Talk about how their strengths positively impact their lives, and what steps can be taken to help with challenging areas.
- Develop a Personal Abilities Journal
  - In a journal, create one column devoted to strengths and accomplishments, and one column for perceived limitations and struggles. Have your child reflect on their entries, first discussing positive accomplishments, then leading into discussion of how to best solve problems they have encountered.

- Reflect on a task they have completed
  - Select a task you would like your child to complete independently. An example might be an independent living task such as unloading the dishwasher or making the bed.
  - Have your child rate their performance based on their level of independence. For example:
    - 1: Independent! I did it on my own!
    - 2: I needed a little help to get it done
    - 3: I needed a lot of help to complete the task.
  - Discuss the accuracy of their rating and compare your thoughts.
    - If your child rated themselves as independent and you also thought they were completely independent, celebrate it! Talk about all of the positive steps they made on their own.
    - If your child rated themselves as independent and you thought they needed help to get it done, talk specifically about which steps they were able to complete by themselves, and where they needed assistance.
    - Start by discussing strengths. Specifically list each step they were able to complete on their own. (Ex. You did a great job rinsing the dishes, and loading the dishes into the dishwasher on your own!) Then point out where they needed help, and how you helped them. (You needed some help remembering to add the soap. I reminded you by telling you to add the soap). Talk about what they could do to be more independent the next time.
    - After the discussion, have them rate their performance again to increase self-awareness!