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children it isn't a bragging session or a competition. It's a space to share and learn about themselves. Journaling is fun and simple and such an effective way to teach kids about who they are. It helps them process their feelings, become aware of thoughts and feelings, and communicate their ideas. Teenagers can write independently about whatever catches their fancy, but both young and older students can benefit from journal prompts. For the tiny ones, journaling can encompass using crayons, pencils, stickers, art, and cut-out memorabilia to express their strengths, weaknesses, feelings, and more. Journaling prompts you can consider include: List 5 of your strengths. Pick one and write about it becoming your strength and how having that strength helps you in life. What are you passionate about? How do you learn best? How would your grownups describe you? How do you describe yourself? (Talk about physical features and personality traits.) When did you feel the happiest? Saddest? Angriest? Most anxious or worried? Other prompts can also include a scene from a movie or TV show (it should be age-appropriate), a song or part of a song's lyrics, a poster, or an object. The kids then need to write about the prompt or draw about it - what they think about it, how it made them feel, etc. Another way that children learn about themselves and thus become self-aware is by listing their hopes and dreams. You can even include fears in this list too. More than just making a list, the kids can also elaborate on these goals and aspirations and paint a visual picture. It's not always easy to just think of your hopes and dreams, so you may find that your children need to be prompted. Maybe do a hopes and dreams list activity once a week and use prompts to help the kids discover what these are. Some hopes and dreams prompts are: What job do you see yourself having one day? Where would you like to travel to? What would you like to see there and experience? Imagine you are 70 years old and you are thinking back on your life. Comparing your dreams and hopes now, what did the 70-year-old you accomplish? What didn't they accomplish? Now reflect on the goals you can create for yourself to help you achieve your dreams. What hobbies do you think your 25-year-old self would have? What do you want to study at college? Or do you want to take a year off? What would you do? While we have an idea of who we are when we're stuck in our comfort bubbles, where we have the same routines and do the same thing day in and day out, trying something new teaches us (and kids) what we are made of. New experiences expand our horizons. They teach us what we have a talent or passion for, and they even teach you about preservation and grit. After all, how would your kids know what they are good at and what they like if they don't try new things? Some activities your child can try: Cake decorating Playing volleyball, football, tennis, basketball, badminton, etc. Doing diamond painting Growing a veggie, herb, or fruit garden Birdwatching Hiking Doing yoga or PilatesTaking photos of interesting and unique things Woodwork Tapestry Geocaching Pro Tip: When your child isn't good at an activity or it really isn't for them, use this as an opportunity to teach them that failure is a chance to learn, not reminisce about all that went wrong or how bad they are at something. When we are grateful, we are thankful for what we have and that's what we focus on. So how is gratitude related to self-awareness? Well, we often (and easily) focus on what we don't have, but when we become aware of what we do have and are grateful for those things, we become self-aware. A study published in the Journal of Happiness Studies in 2019 found that when children start practicing gratitude from an early age, they grow up to be happier as adults. And you can only be truly happy when you are self-aware. A few activities you can use to teach your kid to be thankful are: Teaching them to say "thank you" and mean it Performing random acts of kindness Making a gratitude jar where the child adds a post-it note every day for 1-5 items they are thankful for Creating a gratitude ritual (not just at Thanksgiving) for every morning during breakfast, on the car-ride to school, or every Friday afternoon Keeping a gratitude journal You can also teach kids about self-awareness when they learn and practice positive affirmations. Self-awareness is one of the core aspects of social emotional learning that kids and young students need to master from a young age. Seeing themselves in a positive light and speaking kindly to themselves helps combat automatic negative thoughts, boost self-esteem, promote self-love, and manage their emotions. Try some of these activities to teach your youngster about self-awareness and positive affirmations: Read through or share positive affirmations and have your kid pick their favorite 5 or 10. Your child can then write these affirmations on sticky notes and tape them to random places in the house. When they pass that spot, they need to stop and use the affirmation by saying it aloud. Write a few positive affirmations on a ball. Throw the ball back and forth or from kid to kid, and when a child catches the ball, they need to read one of the affirmations. For the little ones, you can sit on the floor and roll the ball and help them read. Or use pictures with "I am ..." statements. Practice positive thoughts breathing. As the kid breathes in, they need to think of a positive thought or affirmation, pause for 2 to 3 seconds, and then breathe out. You can also teach self-awareness to kids via reading. Find age-appropriate material, and either read to them or have them read by themselves. You can then discuss the chapter, book, or article with them and tie it into the self-awareness goals you want to reach. Some self-awareness book and blogs you can consider using are: Why Am I Me? By Paige Britt Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae The Bad Seed by Jory John Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes Alchemy 365: A Self-Awareness Workbook by Brenda Lightfeather Marrol Believe I Can by Grace Byers Looking Like Me by Walter Dean MyersJust As You Are: A Teen's Guide to Self-Acceptance and Lasting Self-Esteem (The Instant Help Solutions Series) by Michelle Skeen and Kelly Skeen It's Okay to Be Different by Todd Parr Little Big Feelings by Deb MillsHooray for You! A Celebration of You-ness by Marianne Richmond Making vision boards can also help kids to learn about being self-aware. Plus, creating these visual boards can be a ton of fun as children get to be creative. The collage your kid makes can include pictures, drawings, words, quotes, and anything else that fits in with the theme and symbolizes their aspirations, goals, and dreams. Some ideas for vision board activities for kids are: What are your favorite things? What makes you happy? What are your biggest dreams and goals? What is your dream job? What do you value most in this world? Pro Tip: You can also let your kid practice their digital skills and create their vision board on a computer or tablet. Consider Canva, Gimp, Adobe Spark, Visme, and Design Wizard for the design software. Your child can use Ivory Mix, Pexels, Pixabay, and Unsplash for free images. Role playing offers many benefits, from teaching kids about themselves and others to processing new information, gaining a better understanding of the role play scenario, and fostering higher-order thinking skills like comparison, prediction, and analysis. Key aspects of role playing are to keep it real and clear and ensure all the kids have a "job" - whether they have a role to play or are observers in the audience. During the role playing activity, ask the audience to watch actions, words, and emotions. After the role play, ask the kids specific self-awareness questions. You can even delve into different scenarios - "what if X happened, what would you do?" The purpose of role playing is so the kids can see how their reactions and actions impact themselves and others when they act out a situation. Pro Tip: Consider using puppets if the kids are too young to role play. Or model the role playing with the puppets, and then let the children try. A cool self-awareness activity for kids is creating a self-awareness box (yes, like a swear jar, but just better). You need a box, markers, and sticky notes. And you can choose to do this activity daily, weekly, or monthly. You can guide your child on what to write on the sticky notes by giving them themes or asking them questions (or even both). For example, in a strength and weaknesses theme, ask them, "List 3 strengths," "List 3 weaknesses," "What did you learn about a weakness you have?" and "Where did strength help you cope during a challenging situation?" For every question, the child can write their answers or keywords on a sticky note and add it to the box. Or you can let them add 3 to 5 sticky notes per theme. At the end of the week or month, take out the notes and talk about what your child wrote. You can start the day with an emotional check-in with your child or class of students. These check-ins help kids think about how they feel. Only when we understand what we feel can we work through the feelings in a constructive way. With younger students, you can help guide them and teach them the skills they need to work through their emotions. Even older students may need that kind of support. Create a poster for the emotional check-ins. You can get creative with this, but you need to list these 5 simple steps: Pause. Take a deep breath in and exhale. How do you feel? Say how you feel out loud or write the emotion on a post-it note. Take a few minutes to think about your emotion(s). Just feel and breathe. What do you need? Speak your needs out loud or write them on the other side of the post-it note to help you move on. You may think that self-awareness and mindfulness are the same. These concepts are related but they are also different. Being aware helps you be more present, while mindfulness requires lots of introspection and thought process adjustments. Thus, you can use mindfulness activities to teach kids about self-awareness. Some cool mindfulness activities for kids are: Creating mandalas Practicing yoga Using mindfulness apps like Smiling Mind, Headspace for Kids, and Sound Mind. Doing mindful or intentional breathing exercises, like box breathing Doing body scans Create a mindful jar Doing mindfulness meditations When seeking to become more self-aware, drawing is an effective tool for kids. Many have a unique talent for doodling and find peace and enjoyment in it. They can draw their reality and actively express what is in their emotions through art. Give your child a fresh piece of paper, a #2 pencil, a colored pencil, or a crayon, and encourage them to let their emotions go wild. You can also teach self-awareness to kids via reading by finding age-appropriate material, and either read to them or have them read by themselves. If they are upset with someone or a situation, encourage them to write what is most upsetting to them on paper. They can draw the person or an emoji or recreate the circumstance through their art. If they are joyful or excited, art is a helpful tool to do the same. Even when a child doesn't have the words to say to articulate their feelings, art is a helpful tool to become aware of their emotions and open a door for you to discuss it further with them. To express their emotions, children can write a short story with themselves as the main character. As they write the story, they can write about scenarios that have brought on specific emotions and how the main character deals with those issues. Then, you can go over the emotions with them and explain which are healthy and harmful. As well as the action taken in response to those emotions. Then, you can provide feedback on healthier ways to deal with their feelings and validate all the good and productive emotions and responses. Letters to one's future self can be a great way to express emotions. As children grow older and learn ways to express themselves and process emotions, it can be a valuable tool to see how far they have come in their thought patterns. The letter can include a list of their current challenges, goals, abilities, and accomplishments. These can serve as a great reminder when they hit a stumbling block in the future, and their self-esteem has taken a hit. The following are ideas kids can write about to their future role to play or are observers in the audience. During the role playing activity, ask the audience to watch actions, words, and emotions. After the role play, ask the kids specific self-awareness questions. You can even delve into different scenarios - "what if X happened, what would you do?" The purpose of role playing is so the kids can see how their lives that is making a significant impact on them. Someone they hold in high regard. Write loving and uplifting words of encouragement their future self may want to hear if they are going through a difficult time. These short letters can be a great form of self-care and kept in a notebook or folder, tucked away for a particular time when the child needs positive self-talk. Prayer can be a strong lifeline to help children be more self-aware. Knowing there is a caring Heavenly Father who is always with them and available to listen can give them much peace and security when navigating some of life's most complex problems. With prayer, understanding isn't always gained, but calm and strength are. A few other benefits of prayer are: Hope for the future. Children may not know what the future holds, but they can get to know the one who holds the future.Prayer can usher in a peace that surpasses their need to understand what is going on in their lives.They can find a safe space to confidently express their concerns without fear of judgment.It gives them something to look forward to in the future as they watch situations change, and things fall into place over time. Reflecting on past decisions is an excellent way for children to be more self-aware. With your help, guide them through situations that have happened more than once and help them reflect on how they managed it in the past as compared to now. It can be a great way to show them how much personal growth they have achieved over a short time. I helped my nephew Terrance reflect on a recent situation that hurt his feelings. He had a crush on a girl from school and asked her to be his girlfriend, but she turned him down because she liked someone else. He was down about it, so I helped by encouraging him to reflect on what happened 2 short years ago when he was 10 years old. Back when he had his first crush. The little girl he liked was in his homeroom class and rode the same school bus. Back then, he passed his 10-year-old crush a note telling her he liked her and asked if she felt the same. Asking her to circle yes or no. She and her friends laughed about it as she circled no and passed the letter back. He cried and was depressed for the rest of the evening. So, he realized this particular experience with heartbreak didn't lead to tears. And though he was a little bummed out, he didn't let it keep him down as long as before. It helped Terrance to reflect and see how far he had come in a short time when handling disappointment. Ultimately, he felt proud of himself and was confident it was her loss, not his. Many of us assume the worst about ourselves. Especially children. They try something a couple of times and believe they can't do it. But it's healthy for them to question every assumption they have about their abilities. You can help by asking your kids why? Why do you feel like you can't do this or that? Why are you afraid to try it? Why do you think others can do this and you can't? You can help them understand that some things come with practice and perseverance, but nothing will happen if they don't try. When questioning assumptions, they can gain an understanding and recognition of things and people that cause them fear and anxiety. Then, learn and develop healthy ways to examine those feelings and make sound judgments. In the day we live in, many feel children should have the right to make major life-altering decisions. But the reality is that many of us as adults are still unsure of ourselves in our 30s, 40s, and 50s. But our wisdom has far exceeded that of our kids. You can use mindfulness activities to teach kids about self-awareness such as mindfulness meditations. So, the best way to help kids be more self-aware is to be surrounded by wise counsel. As their parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts, we should understand that their preferences will change quickly. Still, we should be available to help them navigate the feelings they express in healthy and productive ways. Let them feel safe when talking with us so they will be comfortable sharing their thoughts. Then, you can ask them open-ended questions to help them reach a more mature conclusion. Children pick up on things like metal to magnets. So, when children use stereotypes and harmful labels to express their feelings about themselves, it is healthy to help them reflect on their choice to use those words. Jessica was turning 13 and asked her parents for a birthday party. She wanted to invite her friends and a few classmates, including Cody, who she had really begun to like. Unfortunately, she shared a birthday with Alaina, who was said to be the prettiest girl in school. Alaina's birthday party was the same day, and unfortunately, Cody went to her party instead of Jessica's. Sadly, while FaceTiming with a friend, Jessica's mom overheard her saying she felt ugly and thought that was why Cody never came to her party. And if she were prettier, Cody would have attended her party instead of Alaina's. So, Jessica's mom sat her down and helped her reflect on her feelings about herself. She asked the following questions: Who told you that you were ugly?Did you feel ugly before the party?Did you ask Cody why he didn't come to your party?Didn't you and your friends have a good time at the party? After taking time to reflect, Jessica realized that she focused on the one thing that disappointed her rather than the many things about that day that went right. She grew a little wiser that day. Similar to listing their strengths and weaknesses, when children reflect on their uniqueness, they can look at the overall sum of themselves and see what makes them one of a kind. Kids often try to gravitate toward and mimic those who are thought of as popular and fun. But by helping them reflect on their unique abilities, talents, personality traits, or sense of style, you can help them navigate a new path. It gives them the confidence to "dare to be different" at an impressionable time when it's cool to be a copycat. Focusing on their uniqueness gives them confidence and a tremendous amount of self-acceptance not to fall into the harmful patterns of comparison. When they reflect on their uniqueness, it helps them: Be grateful for what they have.Be okay with not being perfect.Be their own ally and not so self-critical.Second guess a lot less.Take the world by storm. You help your child the most by offering celebratory reassurance to them, to a large extent, when their unique abilities serve as a blessing and support to others. Before long, it will become ingrained within their hearts and part of the conversations they have with themselves. Teaching kids about being self-aware can be an eye-opening, fun, and fulfilling experience... especially when they use what they learn about themselves to become even better people. After all, David Goggins said it best, "The most important conversations you'll ever have are the ones you'll have with yourself." These moments of introspection are often the ones that motivate us to move in a different direction and improve our lives. Are you looking for some inspiration to help you on your own personal journey of self-awareness? Then don't miss our article on 57 self-awareness quotes so you too can get to know yourself better!