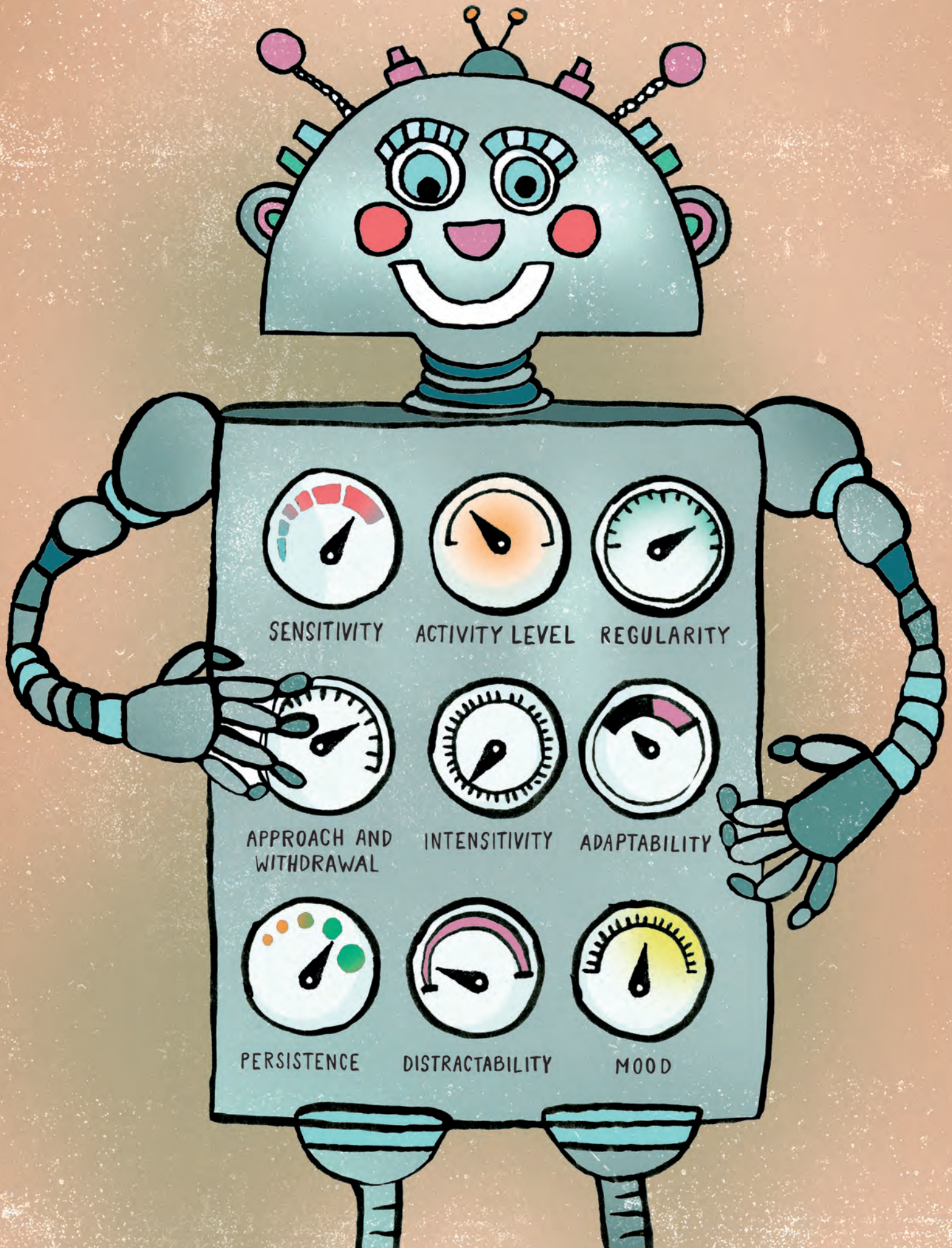


# TEMPERAMENT ROBOT



# 7 SELF-ESTEEM

The feeling of being valued and important and the experience of bringing joy and delight to your loved ones are at the heart of self-esteem. An accepting atmosphere created by adults strengthens children and acts as a mirror for the development of self-knowledge. Children with a sufficiently strong self-esteem are able to accept difference, become attached to people, care for one another and establish a variety of different friendships.

How do you show children that you value them? What kind of an atmosphere do you aim to create when you work with children? How do you create an encouraging and safe atmosphere in a group of children or for meetings with children and their families?

## Self-knowledge

Children develop and strengthen, when they are encouraged to test their boundaries and stumble without the fear of failure. Through trial and error, children understand things about themselves and learn to evaluate their own strengths and abilities. Even small successes strengthen children's self-esteem and create a basis for learning. Cooperation between the home and early childhood educators promotes it. Children find their skills and strengths when they are allowed to try new things in their own time; make mistakes, and try again with the help of an adult. By verbalising and acknowledging children's actions and characteristics and by helping children recognise their positive features, skills and interests, adults have a beneficial impact on the development of children's self-knowledge. By acting in cooperation with others, children learn that everyone has strengths and skills that may need developing. There is no need to be able to do everything at once; new things must be practised – all you need is the courage to do so.


## Self-esteem and temperament

Children may by temperament be slow-burning and cautious, shy, distant or lively and sociable. Self-esteem is not dependant on temperament. It is important for adults to acknowledge their own temperament as well as the differences between children's temperaments. Children's way of behaving and their

HOW DO  
YOU PRAISE  
CHILDREN?

IN WHICH SITUATIONS  
COULD YOU PRAISE  
CHILDREN MORE?

WHEN COULD IT  
FEEL DIFFICULT  
TO SPUR  
CHILDREN ON?



HOW DO YOU HELP PARENTS THINK ABOUT THEIR TEMPERAMENT IN RELATION TO THEIR CHILD'S TEMPERAMENT?

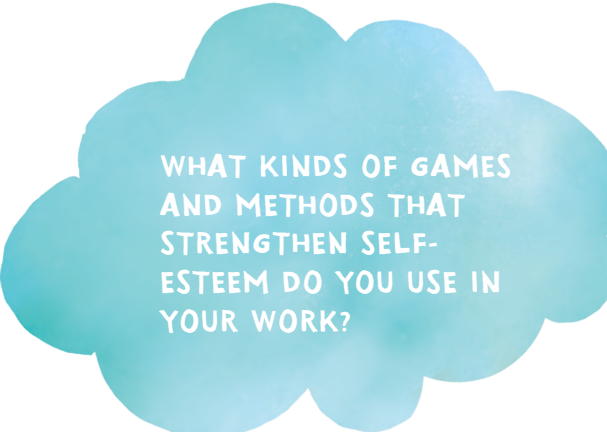
temperaments do not always meet with the surrounding expectations, but all temperaments are equally valuable. A child's temperament may also get on your nerves, but adults should still accept each child as they are. A child that reacts slowly may require patience and tolerance from adults who are used to fast actions. Children cannot adjust their own temperament to suit changing situations, needs and the requirements of different adults; instead, they need the care and support of the adults around them.

Acknowledging differences in temperament may facilitate adults' mutual interaction and the interaction between adults and children and help adults find positive traits in all kinds of children. All behaviour cannot be explained through temperament; the way we behave also depends on our ability to regulate our emotions, on our social skills, culture and learnt habits, values, motivation and daily rhythm – for example, whether a child has slept and eaten enough. The bigger the challenges children face, the more eager adults should be to offer praise even for small successes and attempts.

### Self-respect and positive self-talk

Adults offer children a model, which they mimic in their own actions. To believe in themselves, children must feel that an adult believes in them. When children experience unconditional love, they also know that they are valuable irrespective of their characteristics.

Self-value and good self-esteem guide people to make choices that suit them. When children are praised and when they get to take delight in and be proud of themselves, they form a positive inner model and a favourable self-experience. Thus, they receive positive-thinking resources, which will help them cope with the different challenges life may bring. Children should be taught to find and name good traits in themselves. Adults improve children's self-respect by accepting children's traits and taking joy in them, showing children that all kinds of characteristics are valuable and by verbalising children's characteristics in positive terms. With friendly comments and encouraging examples, children learn to value others and find positive sides in them too.



WHAT KINDS OF GAMES AND METHODS THAT STRENGTHEN SELF-ESTEEM DO YOU USE IN YOUR WORK?

### "A great attempt"

It is important for children to hear praise and approval for trying hard and practising, instead of concentrating too heavily on the result – for example: "You really worked hard and practised well." Approval and praise steer children to behave in a desired way, provide experiences of success and boost self-esteem. In general, children want to please adults. When adults praise children, children feel they bring joy to adults. Children are good at interpreting body language. Gestures, looks and facial expressions communicate non-verbally different feelings and thoughts, which is why it is important that adults acknowledge and recognise their way of communicating.

Self-esteem can be strengthened throughout life by learning to find positive traits in yourself and above-all by appreciating them. Noticing the positive in children, encouragement and exercises that promote self-esteem build children's positive self-image.

Positive comments are also important for parents. They remember child health clinic professionals' encouragement and the positive feedback given by ECEC professionals, and it promotes their coping.

## Support children's self-esteem and mental health

- Take joy in children.
- Show them approval.
- Be encouraging.
- Celebrate both attempt and error.
- Concentrate on successes.
- Encourage children to try.
- Believe in the fact that children will learn.
- Accept the fact that children are not perfect.
- Have the courage to try and fail yourself.
- Be sensitive and interested in children.
- Understand children's temperaments.
- Value and verbalise children's characteristics and skills.
- See children's many possibilities.
- Teach positive inner talk.
- Set clear boundaries for children's activities.
- Show respect for children by taking their opinion into account.

## Self-esteem=self-knowledge + self-appreciation

### SELF-KNOWLEDGE

- Verbalise children's actions and characteristics to them.
- Accept them.
- Teach children to recognise their good characteristics, skills and objects of interest.

### SELF-APPRECIATION

#### ADULTS

- Boost children's self-respect by accepting their characteristics and finding joy in them.
- Show children that different characteristics are valuable and verbalise children's own characteristics in positive terms.

## Positive feedback works when you

- know what you are applauding for.
- acknowledge even small improvements in the child's behaviour.
- provide constructive feedback.
- praise the community and within the community.
- celebrate the individual.
- say positive things about yourself as well.
- encourage others to offer positive and critical feedback.

(Vehkalahti 2011)

## Cooperation with parents

Discuss with the parents how they help their child find his/her strengths and support the child's self-esteem and positive self-image.



## Power rhyme

The rhyme was written and arranged for body instruments by Tuuli Paasolainen. The group can move and do the actions in a circle imitating rap artists.

**I can, I know and I understand!** (*marching towards the centre of the circle*)  
**I can, I know and I understand!** (*reversing from the centre back out to the circle*)  
 I can dress, I can dress and put my shoes on. (*pretending to put trousers and shoes on*)  
 I can dress, I can dress and almost read on! (*pretending to put trousers or shoes on and lifting hands up at the end*)  
**I can, I know and I understand!** (*marching towards the centre of the circle*)  
**I can, I know and I understand!** (*reversing from the centre back out to the circle*)  
 If my tummy is grumbling, I will put some food in (*patting tummy*)  
 If my mouth is feeling dry, I know how to fix it! (*pretending to drink water*)  
**I can, I know and I understand!** (*marching towards the centre of the circle*)  
**I can, I know and I understand!** (*reversing from the centre back out to the circle*)  
 The moon shines high up at night and the sun brings us light (*drawing a large circle in the air*)  
 Sometimes my head feels all dizzy, when I look high up into the sky! (*moving head from side to side and looking up*)  
**I can, I know and I understand!** (*marching towards the centre of the circle*)  
**I can, I know and I understand!** (*reversing from the centre back out to the circle*)  
 And when I don't know (*turning head from side to side and shrugging with palms up*)  
 And when I don't know (*turning head from side to side and shrugging with palms up*)  
 I will ask an adult! (*pointing rhythmically at adults with both index fingers*)  
 I will ask an adult! (*pointing rhythmically at adults with both index fingers*)  
 And when I don't know (*turning head from side to side and shrugging with palms up*)  
 And when I don't know (*turning head from side to side and shrugging with palms up*)  
 I will ask an adult! (*pointing at adults with two index fingers shaking them rhythmically*)  
 I will ask an adult! (*pointing at adults with two index fingers shaking them rhythmically*)

Paasolainen, T. Musiikki-iloa kymmenen kiloa, 2015)  
Translation: Aino Kattelus

When the children repeat the power rhyme, the words will stick to their mind as a positive “mantra”. Repeating the mantra will encourage children and leave them feeling positive. Believing in and trusting your own abilities and yourself is one of life’s most important driving forces. It is every child’s right to trust an adult when their own strength or skills are not sufficient. Repetition, actions and the rhythmic beat enforce the impact.



## Good on me!

Everyone is sitting in a circle. The children’s places can be marked on the floor using masking tape. One of the children stands in the middle of the circle and says one skill s/he is good at or likes. One of the other children who is good at or likes the same thing exchanges places with the one standing in the centre. Each child gets a go at being in the centre. After the round, the children take turns in taking a peek at a secret treasure box. The treasure box needs to have been prepared in advance. The box can be a cardboard jewellery box covered in tinfoil. A mirror is glued on top of the box. The children are told that there is the world’s most precious treasure in the box, and the children get to take a peek at it. The children see their own face in the mirror and are reminded that they are the world’s most important treasures.



## The 'I can' activity

The children sit in a circle and take turns in standing up and saying one skill that they have. The skill can be something simple, such as using a fork when eating, being able to zip a jacket up or climbing in a climbing frame. The other children with the same skill can also stand up. It is important to remind the group at the end that children have many different skills, and they learn more all the time.



## Let's look at art: Antti Drawing in Sand

This artwork is by Venny Soldan-Brofeldt. The artwork is called *Antti Drawing in Sand*. The artwork was painted in 1907 with oil paints on canvas. The size of the painting is 33 x 41 cm.

This artwork was painted at Venny's dear summer place in Toska where she spent many of her summers with her family. In addition to this painting, Venny painted numerous other artworks at her summer place.

The boy, Antti, in this painting is Venny's son. The boy seems focused. He is holding a pen and paper. Antti is drawing on sand, but it feels almost as if he could be at school doing something that requires accuracy. He is deeply focused on what he is doing. He also seems to be pleased the results. Is there a little smile on his face? Has he just learnt to draw something new and exciting?

It looks like Antti really enjoys drawing. Antti's mother, who has painted this picture, really liked drawing as a child too, and she drew a lot from a very young age. Even at school, Venny was almost solely interested in drawing, and that is why her father was worried about her schooling. However, Venny finished school, and as an adult, she really enjoyed teaching children. What is your favourite activity? How does it feel to do something that you are good at?



## Let's make a collage!

Let's make a collage with the theme 'Me'. With the help of the pack of art cards, the children can start by discussing among themselves what they are like as people. They can think about what they can do and what skills they are practising. The children then collect things that describe them and attach them onto cardboard. They can also print a picture of their hand on the piece of card; cut a picture of their favourite toy from an advertising leaflet; write the best part of their favourite story; draw notes from a special song, and paint pictures of people who are important to them.

The collages can be made one small step and theme at a time over a longer period, or they can be finished in one go.

- What is the child in the painting doing?
- What do you think Antti might be drawing? Is he drawing something big or something small?
- Do you like drawing? What do you like to draw?
- What are you good at?
- How does it feel to be able to do something?
- How does it feel to learn a new skill?
- What skills have you acquired recently?
- How does it feel when someone praises you?
- What kinds of things could you praise your friend for and how?



