Children's Independence

What does it mean?

Caredig
Kind

Angerddol
Fired Up

Teulu
Family

Uchelgeisiol
Ambitious

Children's Independence

Fostering children's independence encompasses various aspects of their physical, emotional, and cognitive development. From the early stages of childhood to adolescence, cultivating independence is essential for building resilient and confident individuals who can navigate the complexities of life.

In this booklet, we explain some of the key features of developing independence and how we can do this together. Therefore, this booklet is in two parts: the first part is an overview of the importance of independence and a rational behind why we think it is so important. The second part of this booklet is a framework that has been built by children, families, staff and specialists. This framework looks at 6 key areas: resilience, working together, curiosity, resourcefulness, effort, and self-awareness. It also shows how we can support children to move to the next stage in their independence.

Early Childhood

In the formative years, promoting independence starts with encouraging basic self-help skills. Simple tasks like dressing themselves, brushing their teeth, or organising toys contribute to a child's growing sense of autonomy. This not only builds motor skills but also establishes a foundation for responsibility. As families and school staff, providing opportunities for decision-making within a controlled environment allows children to experience a sense of agency, laying the groundwork for future independence.

Academic Independence

As children progress in their education, the importance of academic independence becomes evident. Encouraging them to take ownership of their learning process fosters a sense of responsibility and curiosity. Allowing them to tackle problems independently, while providing guidance when needed, cultivates critical thinking skills. This autonomy in learning prepares them for the challenges of higher education and beyond, where self-directed study and problem-solving are integral.

Social and Emotional Independence

Developing social and emotional independence is equally crucial. Children need to learn to manage their emotions, make friends, and resolve conflicts on their own. Providing a supportive environment where they can express themselves freely helps build emotional intelligence. Allowing them to navigate social situations independently teaches valuable interpersonal skills, fostering confidence in their ability to connect with others.

Decision-Making and Problem-Solving

Empowering children to make decisions, even small

ones, contributes significantly to their independence. When faced with choices, they learn to weigh options, consider consequences, and take responsibility for their decisions. This process builds decision-making skills and confidence in their ability to navigate a world filled with choices. Encouraging problem-solving in various contexts helps children develop resilience, adaptability, and resourcefulness.

Balancing Guidance and Freedom

While promoting independence, it's crucial to strike a balance between offering guidance and allowing freedom. Too much control can hinder a child's ability to make decisions, while too little support might leave them feeling overwhelmed. Families and school staff play a pivotal role in providing a secure environment that allows for exploration while offering guidance when necessary. This delicate balance helps children develop a healthy sense of autonomy without losing the benefits of guidance and support.

Cultivating a Growth Mindset

Encouraging a growth mindset is integral to fostering independence. A growth mindset is a belief that intelligence, abilities, and talents can be developed through dedication, effort, and learning. This concept, introduced by psychologist Carol Dweck, contrasts with a fixed mindset that sees abilities as unchangeable. The growth mindset encourages individuals, including children, to embrace challenges, persist in the face of setbacks, and view failures as opportunities for learning and improvement.

The connection between a growth mindset and developing children's independence is profound. When children adopt a growth mindset, they approach tasks with a sense of resilience and enthusiasm for learning. This mindset empowers them to see effort as a pathway to improvement, fostering a belief that their abilities can be developed over time. This perspective is crucial in the journey towards independence.

In the context of independence, a growth mindset encourages children to take on challenges, make decisions, and learn from both successes and failures. Instead of being deterred by setbacks, they see them as opportunities to grow and refine their skills. This attitude instils a sense of autonomy, as children become more willing to explore new tasks and responsibilities with the understanding that their efforts contribute to their development.

Moreover, a growth mindset shapes how children perceive feedback. Constructive feedback is seen as valuable input for improvement rather than a judgment of their capabilities. This openness to feedback enhances their ability to self-reflect, make adjustments, and continually strive for improvement.

Carol Dweck talks about the 'power of yet'. The 'power of yet' really encapsulates the transformative potential of a growth mindset. When faced with challenges, adding 'yet' to negative statements reframes them into opportunities for growth. For example, saying "I can't do this" becomes "I can't do this yet." This simple addition fosters a belief in one's ability to improve with effort and time. Embracing the 'power of yet' is a powerful tool, particularly for children, instilling resilience, perseverance, and the understanding that abilities can evolve through dedication and learning.

The Rocket: Independence Framework

Uchelgeisiol / Ambitious

Ysgol Panteg · Meithrin Meddyliau Craff

Independence Characteristics		Firing Up the Engine	Aiming for the Skies	Breaking through Clouds	Darting through Space	Shooting for the Stars
Resilience	Try	I can try tasks before asking for help.	I can try difficult tasks before asking for help. I can ask partners and friends for help before asking the teacher.	I can try tasks before asking for help. I can use the 3-before-me strategy without prompting.	I can attempt difficult tasks using strategies and tools independently.	I can try difficult tasks independently without teacher prompting.
	Persevere	I can persevere when things don't go right the first time.	I can persevere several times before asking for help if things are not going well.	I am able to persevere through using a selection of tools/strategies that have indicated before asking for help. I can use the 3-before-me strategy.	I can persevere with difficult tasks by taking risks, experimenting and questioning. I can think of ways to find information to solve the problem. I can use the 3-before-me strategy.	I can confidently persevere with difficult tasks by taking risks, experimenting and questioning. I can think of ways to find information to solve the problem and I use these ways independently. I can use the 3-before-me strategy.
	Manage Distractions	I can focus on a task for a short time in a quiet environment.	I can focus on a task for a while in a calm environment. Sometimes, I can manage my attention on the task as distractions happen around me.	I am beginning to understand how to manage distractions that will take my attention. This helps me focus more and take on the task at hand.	I understand how to manage distractions that will take my attention. This helps me to fully concentrate and take on the task at hand.	I understand how to manage distractions that will take my attention. This helps me keep focus on what is important and take on the task at hand. I keep track of the time in order to manage time well and ensure that I don't procrastinate the task.
	Make Choices	I can choose between two things.	I can choose between two things and give a reason for the choice.	I am starting to make sensible choices with logic. I am beginning to understand that my choices can affect others.	I can make sensible choices and discuss the rationale behind the choices. I can understand that everyone has the right to make their own choices and I am starting to respect this.	I can make sensible choices weighing up the impact of these choices. I can present the rationale for the choices. I can understand that everyone has the right to make their own choices and I respect these choices.
Working Together	Sharing	I can share resources with others. I can do this politely by using "Can I... please" and "Thank you".	I can share resources with others collaboratively. I can do this politely by using "Can I... please" and "Thank you" showing respect for people and things.	I am able to share resources and ideas and I am starting to discuss and present ideas with others.	I can share resources and ideas with others confidently. I am comfortable presenting and sharing ideas and respect the ideas and opinions of others.	I can confidently share resources, ideas and strategies with others without prompting. I am comfortable presenting and sharing ideas and can respect the ideas and opinions of others and use it to color my work.
	Listening	I can listen to simple instructions.	I can listen with increased attention. I can act on the ideas.	I can listen to the ideas and opinions of others with increased attention. I am beginning to respond to others by questioning.	I can listen to the ideas, concepts and opinions of others. I respect and value other ideas. I can respond to others and ask questions to better understand.	I can listen to the ideas, concepts and opinions of others with confidence. I respect and value other ideas. I can respond to others and ask questions with confidence to better understand.

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	Communicate	I can communicate my simple personal needs with a familiar adult. I can ask for help where needed in a simple way.	I can communicate my needs with others. I'm starting to share my opinion with reasons (at times). I am starting to respond to others as they share opinions.	I am able to communicate my needs with others with increasing confidence. I am beginning to share my opinion with reasons.	I can communicate my opinion, the opinion of others and understand that different opinions are important. I can state reasons and evidence (at times) to support my opinion. I can respond to others and ask questions to better understand. I can communicate my needs and my rights clearly in Welsh and in English.	I can communicate my opinion in, the opinion of others confidently and understand that different opinions are important. I can state reasons and evidence to support my opinion. I can respond to others and ask questions to better understand. I can communicate my needs and my rights clearly in Welsh and in English.
	Empathise	I can tell when someone is sad or happy. I can offer help to others when they need the help.	I am beginning to recognise a range of emotions within other behaviours. I can offer help to others when they need the help.	I am starting to attempt seeing situations through other eyes. I can recognise a range of emotions within other behaviours (e.g. anger, sadness, fear, happiness, surprise, respect, jealousy). I can offer help to others when they need the help.	I am increasingly able to empathise with other emotions. I am starting to ask questions to better understand their emotions and opinions. I dare to see situations through other eyes. I can support others and their rights. I am beginning to sympathise and show empathy, where appropriate, even if I don't fully agree with the person's opinion.	I can empathise with others' emotions with confidence. I ask questions to better understand their emotions and opinions. I dare to see situations through other eyes. I can confidently support others and their rights. I can sympathise and show empathy, where appropriate, even if I don't fully agree with the person's opinion.
	Inclusion of Others	I can recognise others while playing.	I include others in play and within tasks. I am beginning to see the value of working together with others. I am beginning to recognise differences within others to compare with me.	I am starting to stand up for the rights and inclusion of others at school. I am beginning to understand that every individual has value and that it is important to listen to other opinions and include them in decision making. I recognise differences within others to compare with me. I see the value of working together with others.	I stand up for the rights and inclusion of others in school and beyond. I am beginning to understand that every individual has value and that it is important to listen to other opinions and include them in decision making. I understand that individuals are different, come from different backgrounds and that this is something to celebrate.	I stand up for the rights and inclusion of others in the school and beyond confidently and maturely. I understand that every individual has value and that it is important to listen to other opinions and include them in making decisions. I understand that individuals are different, come from different backgrounds and that this is something to celebrate.
Curiosity	Inquisitive	I can ask questions after a stimulus.	I can ask questions about the world around us following a stimulus.	I can ask questions to find out more about the world around us. I show enthusiasm when inquiring and offer observations on these inquiries.	I can question how things work and start to discover and explore this in practice. These inquiries will be used to make decisions and inspire my work.	I am able to discover findings to my inquiries through observation, investigation and questioning. These discoveries will feed my understanding and encourage me to continue to be an inquiring member of the learning community.
	Think	I can think and discuss things I like and don't like.	I can think and discuss things I like and don't like confidently and start to offer reasons.	I can think and discuss things I like and don't like confidently and offer reasons. I'm starting to understand that people have the right to think differently.	I can think independently and give reasons for my ideas. I understand that everyone has the right to think differently and I respect this. I am starting to think critically when thinking about opposing ideas.	I can think independently with confidence and offer reasons for my ideas. I understand that everyone has the right to think differently and I respect this. I can think critically when thinking about opposing ideas.

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	Making Connections	I am starting to be able to sort and categorise objects. I classify by shape, size, colour and type. They do this by playing games and doing tasks. I make connections between things that are within my experience (e.g. it's cold so you need to wear a coat).	I can sort and categorise objects. I classify according to shape, size, colour and type independently. I can classify objects thinking about understanding how they are different, as much as understanding how they are the same. For example, understand that penguins and ostriches are birds, but unlike other birds they do not fly. I confidently make connections between things that are within my experience.	I can gather facts together from different places. I can confidently classify objects thinking about understanding how they are different, as much as understanding how they are the same. I am starting to make connections between different topics and facts in order to see links. I am starting to make connections between abstract concepts and concrete concepts.	I am starting to pull together information from different sources, consider how to use it effectively then use it. I make connections between ideas and pull information together for a defined purpose. I am beginning to do this by considering bias and differences in opinion and information. I make connections between different topics and facts in order to see connections. I make connections between abstract concepts and concrete concepts.	I can draw information from different sources, consider how to use it effectively then use it. I can think about reliability and bias within texts. I make connections between ideas and pull information together for a defined purpose. I do this considering bias and differences in opinion and information. I confidently make connections between different topics and facts in order to see connections. I am beginning to understand how facts can, at times, be put together into conspiracy theories and the interpretation of facts may not always be an easy task.
Resourceful	Explore	I can explore and experiment with different resources which motivates me.	I can confidently explore and experiment with different resources and show curiosity.	I can explore in different contexts with confidence and use different resources.	I can explore in different contexts confidently. I can use various tools correctly. I can manage risk to audit successfully.	I can explore confidently in different contexts. I can use various tools confidently and correctly. I can manage risk to explore successfully.
	Planning	I can think of what needs to be done to complete a task with help.	I am starting to think about steps that need to be taken and why in order to be successful in a task.	I can think of steps that need to be taken and why in order to be successful in a task. I can plan this strategically with help. Sometimes this is done as a group.	I am starting to plan confidently for tasks thinking about the kind of resources and support that will be needed. I can do this independently or as part of group work. I am starting to think carefully about the steps that need to be taken and set success criteria for these steps.	I can confidently plan for tasks thinking about the kind of resources and support that will be needed. I can do this independently or as part of group work. I can think carefully about the steps that need to be taken and set success criteria for these steps. I can use my plans to evaluate progress and change plans in action giving logic.
	Reason	I am starting to draw conclusions and design a course of action to solve simple problems. I am beginning to use prior knowledge in choosing a course of action from options that have been put before me.	I am beginning to identify and apply appropriate reasoning and thinking strategies for tasks. I am beginning to draw conclusions and design a course of action to solve a problem. I am beginning to use prior knowledge and use evidence when choosing a course of action or reaching a conclusion. I am beginning to evaluate procedures and results and simply explain and justify ideas.	I am able to identify and apply appropriate reasoning and thinking strategies for tasks with increasing confidence. I can draw conclusions and design a course of action to solve a problem. I use previous knowledge and use evidence when choosing a course of action or reaching a conclusion. I can evaluate procedures and results and explain and justify ideas simply.	I am starting to use logic to assess whether there is enough evidence to justify a claim, conclusion or result. I can draw conclusions and design a course of action, scrutinise ideas or concepts, test conclusions and adjust actions when designing a course of action. I am beginning to evaluate the effectiveness of ideas, products, performances, methods and approaches against specific criteria.	I can use logic to assess whether there is enough evidence to justify a claim, conclusion or result. I can draw conclusions and design a course of action, scrutinise ideas or concepts, test conclusions and adjust actions when designing a course of action. I can explain intentions and justify ideas, methods and actions, and explain expected and unexpected results against identified criteria.

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	Evaluate	I can discuss what went well with a task or in my play.	I can confidently discuss what went well with a task or in my play. I can discuss things I can improve or things that went wrong.	I can discuss strengths and areas for improvement with my work and play. I give reasons and can confidently explain why something was successful and why something didn't work.	I am starting to discuss strengths/advantages and weigh up with areas of development/weaknesses. I am starting to plan next steps I need to take in order to improve my work or my skills. I am beginning to use critical and other constructive evaluations in order to build a picture of improvements.	I can discuss strengths/advantages and weigh up with areas of development/weaknesses. I can plan next steps I need to take in order to improve my work or my skills. I can use critical and other constructive evaluations in order to draw a picture of improvements. I am then able to plan and act on next steps.
	Time Management	I can tell what's coming next and start following the routine of the day. I'm starting to understand when things happen.	I can follow the routine of the day and start to understand when things happen. I can explain a specific procedure and why this is important.	I can follow the routine of the day. I can confidently explain a specific procedure and why this is important. I am beginning to understand how to complete a task in a given time.	I can complete simple tasks in a timely manner. I am beginning to understand how to focus on the task at hand and how to prioritise tasks appropriately.	I can complete tasks independently in a timely manner. I can explain why some things take longer than others and also respect why tasks take longer for some people. I understand how to focus on the task at hand and how to prioritise tasks appropriately.
Effort	Participate	I can contribute during activities and tasks and show commitment and enjoyment.	I am able to contribute and commit during tasks. I am starting to share ideas and appreciate the ideas of others.	I am able to collaborate with others when contributing to tasks. I share ideas and appreciate the ideas of others more confidently.	I am beginning to appreciate the enjoyment and dedication of others to tasks taking into account the skills and needs of my peers. I can commit to a variety of initiatives showing respect for things that don't necessarily interest me. I am able to work effectively as part of a team, appreciating and understanding the importance of different roles within the team.	I am able to appreciate the enjoyment and dedication of others to tasks taking into account the skills and needs of my peers. I can commit to a variety of initiatives showing respect for things that don't necessarily interest me. I am able to work confidently and effectively as part of a team, appreciating and understanding the importance of different roles within the team.
	Challenge and Motivation	I am beginning to take on challenges that have been provided by the teacher. I am starting to be enthusiastic about learning new things and skills.	I undertake challenges provided by the teacher. I'm starting to choose to challenge myself with tasks. I am enthusiastic about learning new things and skills.	I am beginning to understand that challenges within tasks and life are positive things and I choose to challenge myself to be an independent learner. I am enthusiastic about learning new things and skills.	I understand that challenges within tasks and life are positive things and I choose to challenge myself to be an independent learner. I persevere and maintain motivation for tasks and extending my learning.	I know that challenges within tasks and life are positive things and I choose to challenge myself to be an independent learner with motivation. I do this though sometimes it will mean I will fail. I persevere enthusiastically and maintain motivation for tasks and extending my learning.
	Take Risks	I am starting to take risks when carrying out tasks within the classroom environment and under limited conditions.	I am starting to take risks when carrying out tasks within the classroom environment. I am starting to weigh up when choices are given. I'm starting to not be afraid of making mistakes.	I am beginning to weigh up when predicting the impact of risks in carrying out practical tasks. I am starting to take measured risks in order to take risks and learn new things. I'm becoming more confident to not be afraid of making mistakes.	I am able to take stock when predicting the impact of risks when carrying out practical tasks. I am beginning to understand that innovation and risk-taking go hand in hand. I take measured risks to take risks and learn new things. I'm not afraid to make mistakes when I've measured the risks.	I am able to take stock when predicting the impact of risks while carrying out practical tasks with confidence. I understand that innovation and risk-taking go hand in hand. I take measured risks to take risks and learn new things. I'm not afraid to make mistakes when I've measured the risks.

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Self-Awareness	Reflection	I can simply repeat what I have done.	I can confidently repeat what I have done and give a rationale.	I am beginning to reflect on my work and previous experiences and begin to respond to these observations. I use this reflection to construct and reconstruct.	I can reflect on my work and previous experiences and respond appropriately to these observations. I can use this reflection to colour opinions as well as use it to recreate. I am beginning to reflect purposefully taking into account the reflections of each different.	I can reflect independently on my work and previous experiences and respond confidently to these observations. I can use this reflection to colour opinions as well as use it to recreate. I can reflect purposefully and show respect for others and their reflections.
	Take Responsibility	I am beginning to understand that I need to take responsibility for my behaviour and that actions have consequences.	I understand that I need to take responsibility for my behaviour and that actions have consequences. I am beginning to understand that taking responsibility means being honest, being self-aware and evaluating.	I understand that I have a responsibility to learn in order to improve myself. I am beginning to understand that I have a responsibility to learn from what goes wrong or any failures. I understand that my actions have consequences and begin to explain the reasons why. I am beginning to understand that there are individual responsibilities and responsibilities at the level of group work. I understand that taking responsibility means being honest, being self-aware and evaluating.	I can take responsibility for my choices when the consequences are positive or negative. I understand that I have a responsibility to learn from what goes wrong or any failures. I am beginning to understand that there are individual responsibilities and responsibilities at the level of group work. I confidently understand that taking responsibility means being honest, being self-aware and evaluating. I can understand that my actions have consequences and begin to explain the reasons why.	I can take responsibility for my choices when the consequences are positive or negative. I confidently understand that I have a responsibility to learn from what goes wrong or any failures. I understand that there are individual responsibilities and responsibilities at group work level. I confidently understand that taking responsibility means being honest, being self-aware and evaluating.
	Goal and Target Setting	I undertake tasks and targets set by the teacher in order to improve myself.	I undertake tasks and targets set by the teacher in order to improve myself and I'm starting to see that I need to challenge myself in order to improve.	I am starting to set targets for my learning following reflection on my strengths and areas of development. I can check my progress often and make sure I'm focused on improving myself. I am beginning to understand that I need to challenge myself in order to achieve my potential.	I am able to set targets independently for my learning following reflection on my strengths and areas of development. I can check my progress often and make sure I'm focused on improving myself. I understand that I need to challenge myself in order to achieve my potential.	I am able to set targets independently for my learning following reflection on my strengths and areas of development. I can check my progress often and ensure that I am focused in order to improve myself in a confident manner. I understand that I need to challenge myself in order to achieve my potential and I am motivated to plan my next steps.