

Introduction to Self-Management

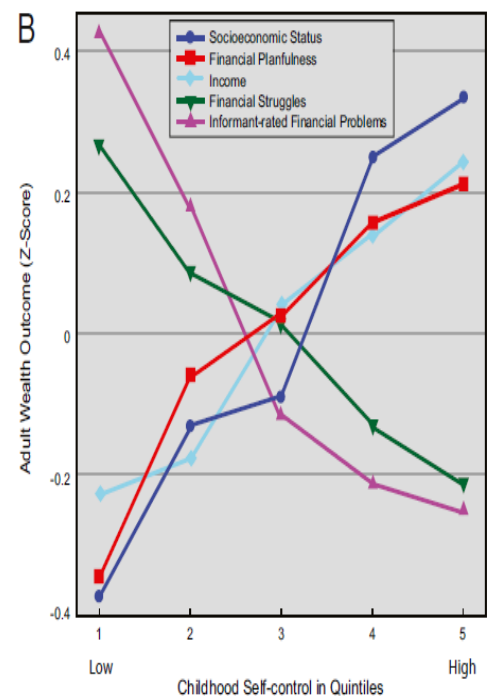
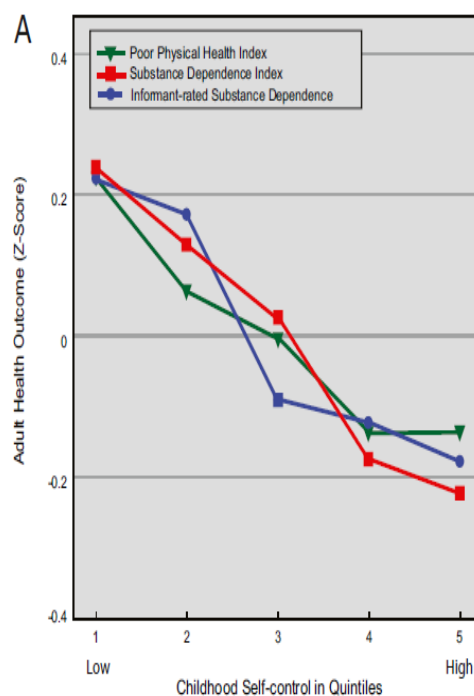
Overview

Self-management, which is also referred to as “self-control” or “self-regulation,” is the ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, delaying gratification, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward personal and academic goals.ⁱ Students with strong self-management skills arrive to class prepared, pay attention, follow directions, allow others to speak without interruption, and work independently with focus. Self-control in children as young as age 5 can predict important life outcomes such as high school completion, physical health, income, single parenthood, substance dependence, and criminal involvement.

Why This Matters: Strong self-management skills may contribute to better outcomes in school and beyond:

Fewer Dropouts: One recent report demonstrates that, controlling for academic achievement, children with better self-management at age 4 were almost 40% more likely to complete college by age 25.ⁱⁱ

Better Life Outcomes: As summarize in the graphs to the right, a landmark study showed that children’s self-management between ages 3-11 predicted key adult outcomes, such as physical health, substance dependence, personal finances, and criminal offenses.ⁱⁱⁱ Childhood self-management also predicts life satisfaction and parenting skill.^{iv}



Improved Academic Outcomes: Walter Mischel’s “Marshmallow Test” showed that ability to delay gratification at age 4 predicts academic and social competence as well as ability to cope with stress later in life. Ten years after the experiment, those who had delayed gratification were rated by their parents as more academically and socially competent, verbally fluent, rational, attentive, planful, and able to deal with frustration and stress. Several years later, the group that had delayed gratification at age 4 also had higher SAT scores than their peers who had not.^v

Sample questions we asked students in the SEL 2014 Pilot:

Please answer how often you did the following. During this marking period...

- I came to class prepared.
- I remembered and followed directions.
- I allowed others to speak without interruption.
- I worked independently with focus.

ⁱ CASEL.org (<http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/core-competencies/>)

ⁱⁱ McClelland, Piccinin, Acock & Stallings (2011) Relations between preschool attention and later school achievement and educational outcomes

ⁱⁱⁱ Moffitt, T. E., Arseneault, L., Belsky, D., Dickson, N., Hancox, R. J., Harrington, H., Houtes, R., Poulton, R., Roberts, B., Ross, S., Sears, M., Thomson, W.M., & Caspi, A. (2011). A gradient of childhood self-control predicts health, wealth, and public safety. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *108*(7), 2693-2698.); Knudsen, E. I., Heckman, J. J., Cameron, J. L., & Shonkoff, J. P. (2006). Economic, neurobiological, and behavioral perspectives on building America's future workforce. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *103*(27), 10155-10162.

^{iv} Moffitt, et al., (2011); Knudsen, E. I., Heckman, J. J., Cameron, J. L., & Shonkoff, J. P. (2006). Economic, neurobiological, and behavioral perspectives on building America's future workforce. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *103*(27), 10155-10162.

^v Mischel, W., Shoda, Y., & Rodriguez, M. L. (1989). Delay of gratification in children. *Science*, *244*, 933-938; Y. Shoda, W. Mischel, & P.K. Peake (1990). Predicting adolescent cognitive and self-regulatory competencies from preschool delay of gratification. *Developmental psychology*, *26*(6), 978-86.