

Lesson 1

Be Assertive

Lesson Objectives

- ❑ Demonstrate assertive behavior.
- ❑ Describe and differentiate between assertive, aggressive, and passive responses to a situation.
- ❑ Explain how assertive behavior contributes to safer classrooms and communities.
- ❑ Use Stop, Breathe, and Think to maintain emotional control.

Materials

- ❑ PowerPoint File: LowerLesson1.pptx
- ❑ Superhero Poster
- ❑ Power to Choose Poster
- ❑ Emotional Control Poster
- ❑ Comic Handout - Lesson 1: The Monkey Bars

Preparation

- ❑ Set up computer or tablet and projector and load the PowerPoint file.
- ❑ Troubleshoot audiovisual equipment.
- ❑ Display posters around the room.

Engage

Show PowerPoint Slide: Title Page.

Greet the class and introduce yourself before beginning the script.

- 🗣️ ChildBuilders believes that everyone has a right to be safe and respected as they go through their day. That includes you, your teachers, and the kids outside of this classroom.

Stand Strong • Stay Safe
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- 🗣️ This means that each one of you also has a responsibility to make choices that help keep you and the rest of your community safe and respected.

Show Superhero Poster or PowerPoint Slide.

- 🗣️ These superheroes are going to help me teach this program. Their names are Ray, Twist, Volt, and Jumps. They are kids, just like you, and they know how to find their personal strength and make safe, responsible choices when they are in danger. Over the next five lessons they will show you how to Stand Strong to Stay Safe!



- 🗣️ In these lessons, the superheroes will help you learn the **Stand Strong Superpowers**.

Lesson 1: Be Assertive

Click through the PowerPoint to show the definitions of each Superpower as you discuss them.

- I deserve respect. RESPECT means accepting others as they are, showing you care about their physical and emotional wellbeing, and treating others well.
- I have the right to be safe. SAFETY means freedom from physical or emotional harm.
- I have the power to choose. Everyone has a CHOICE about how to respond to unsafe situations. Stay calm and in control in order to think it through and make a choice that respects yourself and others.
- I will get help. Sometimes a situation is unsafe or a problem is too big to handle alone. GET HELP from a trusted adult, and keep telling until you get the help you need.

As you say the following, point to the corresponding words on the poster or PowerPoint slide.

- Here is an easy way to remember this. Repeat after me:
RESPECT, SAFETY, CHOICE, GET HELP.

Show PowerPoint Slide: Assertiveness.

- Look at how the superheroes are standing. What is one word you could use to describe their attitude?
⇒ *Strong, powerful, confident, in control*
- All of the superheroes are being **assertive**.
- Assertiveness** is standing up for yourself and others in a way that makes sure everyone feels safe and respected. Assertiveness is how superheroes and kids like you stand strong to stay safe.
- This first lesson is about how you can be assertive.



Stand Strong Superpowers

I deserve respect.

I have the right to be safe.

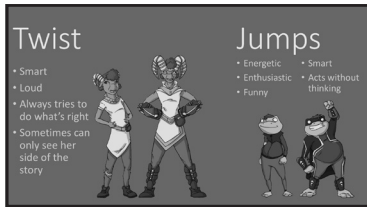
I have the power to choose.

I will get help.



assertive

Confidently standing up for yourself and others while respecting everyone involved.



Explore: The Monkey Bars

Show PowerPoint Slide: Twist and Jumps.

- 👤 We're going to start our lesson with a story about Twist and Jumps. Here we have Twist and Jumps as kids and superheroes.

Have students read the character descriptions from the PowerPoint as you present.

- 👤 Twist is smart, loud, and always tries to do what's right. She is quick to stand up for her friends, but sometimes she can only see her side of the story.
- 👤 Jumps is very energetic and enthusiastic. He's funny and smart, but sometimes he acts without thinking.

Option 1: Show Video

Show PowerPoint Slide: The Monkey Bars.

Click to play the embedded video or follow the link to the streaming video file. The video includes the introduction to the comic.

Option 2: Read Comic

Distribute the Comic Handout – Lesson 1: The Monkey Bars.

Read the introduction aloud.

- 👤 This story is about Jumps and Twist. Jumps and Twist are pretty good friends but don't play together all the time. The story begins just as recess is about to end. Twist is beginning to clean up the recess equipment. Jumps loves the monkey bars and hopes to have one last turn before the end of recess. But time is running out.

Read the comic to students while they follow along using their own copies.

Review Conflict

- 👤 What was the conflict or the problem in the story?
 - ⇒ *Jumps broke a rule at recess by using the monkey bars before another student was done. Twist pulled him off the bars because he broke the rule, which caused Jumps to fall. Jumps' body and feelings were hurt.*

Discuss: Passive, Aggressive, Assertive

Show PowerPoint Slide: Body Language.

- Both of these characters have something to say to the other character in the scene. Look at their body language and attitude. Is there a difference in how they are communicating?

⇒ Yes.

- What do you see in Twist's body language?

⇒ *She is standing over jumps, has her arms crossed, and looks angry.*

- Is she being kind and respectful?

⇒ *No. Her words and actions hurt Jumps.*

- What do you see in Jumps' body language?

⇒ *Jumps seems confident and calm.*

- Is he ready to communicate in a kind and respectful way?

⇒ Yes.



Show Power to Choose Poster or PowerPoint Slide: Power to Choose.

Point to the appropriate words as you discuss the following.

- Remember that in the comic, both Twist and Jumps were trying to solve a problem, but had different ways of doing it.

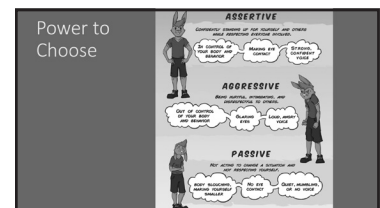
- Jumps was being kind and respectful. He stood up for himself, and did it in a way that respected himself and Twist. Which of these words describes Jumps' way of communicating?

⇒ *Assertive.*

- Jumps was being **assertive** by confidently standing up for himself while respecting everyone involved.

- On the other hand, Twist was not respecting Jumps. She used her personal power to hurt Jumps by yanking him off the monkey bars and then yelling at him. Which of these words describes Twist's way of communicating?

⇒ *Aggressive*



aggressive

Being hurtful,
intimidating, and
disrespectful to others.

passive

Not acting to change
a situation and not
respecting yourself.

- ☛ Twist was being **aggressive** by being hurtful, intimidating, and disrespectful to others.
- ☛ Another way to communicate is by being **passive**, which means not acting to change a situation and not respecting yourself. Being passive does not solve problems.
- ☛ Imagine the story had gone a different way. I am going to read some different ways Jumps could have responded to this situation and you tell me which style of communication it is.
- ☛ What if Jumps had stood up, put his hands in his pocket, and walked away muttering, "I hate it when my friends are mean to me."
 - ⇒ *Passive*
- ☛ What if Jumps had pushed Twist to the ground, saying, "Now you know how it feels?"
 - ⇒ *Aggressive*
- ☛ What if Jumps had stayed on the ground and refused to talk to Twist until someone came to ask how he was doing?
 - ⇒ *Passive*
- ☛ What if after a few days, Jumps gathered a couple of friends and attacked Twist at the neighborhood park to teach her a lesson?
 - ⇒ *Aggressive*
- ☛ Remember, being assertive is the way to solve problems safely, respectfully, and effectively.

Practice

- ☛ Now it's time for you to practice these ways of communicating. Imagine that this situation is happening to you.

Choose ONE of the following scenarios. You will refer to this scenario throughout the rest of the Practice section. Read your chosen scenario to your students.

1. During recess, your classmates are dividing up into teams to play a game. As soon as you get picked for one of the teams, one of

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your teammates groans very loudly and says, "Oh no. Get ready to lose this game, team!" Several of your teammates laugh. You feel angry and embarrassed at being rejected like this.

2. A friend is playing at your house after school before your parents are home. Your friend decides it is a good idea to cook pancakes over the gas stove. You know the rule is that before parents are home, snacks are fine, but cooking is not allowed. You are nervous about your friend's plan, but your friend insists that it is fine and says, "Stop being a baby. Your parents won't even know what we did."

Passive

Show Power to Choose Poster or PowerPoint Slide: Passive.

- 🗨️ First we will respond to this situation passively.

Model a passive stance (described below in the script) as you read the following. Instruct students to stand up.

- 🗨️ Stand like me. Imagine that you are trying to make yourself small or disappear. Slouch your shoulders, cross your arms, and look at the floor. Shift your weight from leg to leg or cross one leg over the other.
- 🗨️ How does your body feel? Do you feel strong, confident, powerful, or in control?

⇒ *No. Feels weak, uncertain, not in control or in charge.*

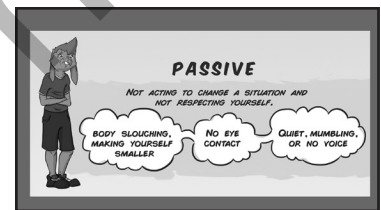
Have students sit down. Call on one student to remain standing to demonstrate a passive response to the situation.

- 🗨️ Now, feeling like this, how do you respond to the situation?

Draw attention to body language, tone of voice, and the words the student uses (mumbling, staying quiet, feeling sad or embarrassed, conforming even though you know it's wrong). Model passive behavior as needed.

- 🗨️ Does this solve the problem?

⇒ *No.*

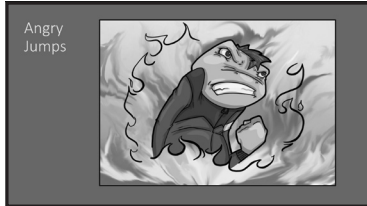


Teacher Note

Respond to the student's words and body language. For example, you could say: "Notice how uncomfortable she seems. She isn't very sure of herself, and I'm not sure what she wants. Her voice is very quiet, and her words are not very clear. She does not seem to be using her personal power to solve this problem."

Aggressive

- Now, let's imagine how we would respond to this situation aggressively.



Show PowerPoint Slide: Angry Jumps.

- Imagine this situation made you feel very angry, like Jumps in this picture. When you feel angry or upset, what happens to your body?

⇒ *Heart starts beating quickly, cheeks flush, body feels hot.*

Show Power to Choose Poster or PowerPoint Slide: Aggressive.

Have students stand up and model an aggressive stance following these instructions.

- Now, imagine you feel angry and upset. Clench your teeth, tighten your shoulders, and hold your hands in fists. Feel all of your muscles tighten and your body become intimidating.

Model an aggressive stance as you encourage students to follow these instructions.

- How does your body feel?
 - ⇒ *Powerful, on edge, out of control, stressed, uncomfortable.*
- Do you feel like you can be respectful of other people when your body feels like this?
 - ⇒ *No.*

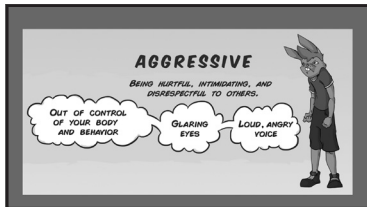
Have students sit down. Call on one student to remain standing to demonstrate an aggressive response to the situation.

- Now, feeling like this, how do you respond to the situation?

Draw attention to body language, tone of voice, and the words the student uses (yelling, towering, threatening, making fists, hitting). Model aggressive behavior as needed.

- Do you think this response will solve this problem safely and respectfully?

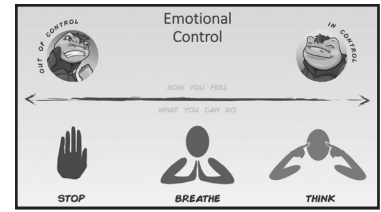
⇒ *No.*



Stop, Breathe, Think

Show Poster or PowerPoint Slide: Emotional Control.

- When you are very angry, your emotions are out of control, and it is very easy to react aggressively even if you don't mean to. You might do or say the first thing that pops into your head, which is not usually the safe and respectful choice. In order to make sure everyone feels safe and respected, practice controlling your emotions to make better choices.



Lead the class in practicing the **Stop, Breathe, Think** strategy for emotional control. Refer to the poster as you give instructions.

Have students stand up. Demonstrate good breathing posture by gently stretching up through your core and lifting the weight of your chest off your diaphragm. Your neck should be relaxed, your chin tucked slightly, and your gaze looking calmly straight ahead. When all students are sitting or standing comfortably still, give the following verbal instructions:

Directing students to follow your lead, raise your hand towards the front as if you were stopping traffic.

- When something happens that makes your emotions rise and you start to become angry, sad, or frustrated, the first thing to do is to **Stop**. This might mean that you need to walk away from a game, conversation, or argument, or that you need to tell your mind to stop thinking so fast.

Model the next action by placing one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly.

- Next, **Breathe**. Stand like this, with one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly, and take a deep breath into your belly. Breathe in as you count slowly to three. Gently hold for a second, and then let air out of your lungs while counting to five. Gently push all the remaining breath out of your lungs, feeling your belly tighten. Let your body tell you when to breathe in again, and repeat a few times.
- Taking deep breaths calms your body and helps you focus.

Finally, place your fingertips at your temples in a "thinking" motion. Have students do the same.

- 🧠 Then **Think**. Once your body and brain are calm, you can think logically about how to solve the problem.

Explain to students that the Emotional Control Poster will stay in the classroom as a reminder to **Stop, Breathe, and Think** when they need to be assertive.

Assertive



Show Power to Choose Poster or PowerPoint Slide: Assertive.

Have students stand if they are not already standing.

- 🧠 Now that you are in control of your emotions, not reacting impulsively or aggressively, let's imagine how it would feel to respond assertively to this situation.

- Stand with your feet about hip width apart.
- Look straight ahead and make eye contact.
- Relax your neck and roll your shoulders back and down.
- Spread your fingers and extend your arms powerfully down by your sides.
- Pay attention to your feet and toes, feeling the ground pressing up into the bottom of your feet.
- Feel energy in your feet, up through your legs and body, and into the top of your head as you stand tall. Feel energy in all parts of your body as you stand still but ready to act.

Tell students that they may relax their hands to their sides or put them on their hips as long as they continue to feel their legs and feet holding strength. While they are standing in this pose, ask them the following questions:

- 🧠 How does your body feel?
 - ⇒ *Strong, confident, powerful, and in control.*
- 🧠 Do you feel like you can stand up for yourself or a friend when your body feels like this?
 - ⇒ Yes.

Lesson 1: Be Assertive

Have students sit down. Call on one student to remain standing to demonstrate an assertive response to the situation.

- Now, feeling like this, how do you respond to this situation?

Draw attention to body language, tone of voice, and the words the student uses. Reinforce assertive words, tone, and body language. Model assertive behavior as needed.

- What would happen if your assertive response (reference scenario) didn't work? What could you do then?

⇒ *Tell someone, get help.*

Show Superhero Poster or PowerPoint Slide.

- If you try to solve a problem assertively and it doesn't work, get help from an adult you trust. Who would you tell to get help?

⇒ *School personnel, including counselor, classroom teacher, enrichment teachers, coaches, nurse, student support teachers.*

- What if the person you tell doesn't believe you or doesn't help you?

⇒ *Keep telling until you get the help you need.*

- When you are assertive and use the Stand Strong Superpowers, you are using your personal strength to keep yourself, your schools, and communities safe.



Conclude

- Today you practiced being strong, in control, and ready to solve problems confidently, safely and respectfully. Take this feeling with you through the rest of your day so you can face problems assertively. Remember the **Stand Strong Superpowers**:

- **Respect:** I deserve respect,
- **Safety:** I have the right to be safe,
- **Choice:** I have the power to choose, and
- **Get help:** I will get help.