

COMPETENCE

What is this developmental skill?

Competence is the belief that "I can learn, solve problems, and accomplish things." It develops through successful experiences, persistence, and encouragement rather than perfection.

How does this normally develop?

Children build competence as they master new skills with support from caring adults. Whether learning to dress themselves, ride a bicycle, or complete schoolwork, each success strengthens their confidence to face future challenges.

How can neglect interfere?

Children who experience neglect may have had fewer opportunities to learn new skills or receive encouragement. Without guidance or positive feedback, they may doubt their abilities or become afraid to try unfamiliar tasks.

What might this look like?

A child may:

- Avoid challenging activities.
- Become frustrated easily.
- Say, "I'm not good at anything."
- Depend heavily on adults.
- Give up after small setbacks.
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Parenting Implications

Provide opportunities for success through manageable challenges. Praise effort, persistence, and problem-solving rather than focusing only on the final result. Allow your child to experience both success and mistakes as part of learning.

From Understanding to Attunement

Competence grows through experience. Every opportunity your child has to succeed with your encouragement strengthens their confidence in themselves.