



A is for Accountability

AARMA Principle #5 – My choices, my power!

The fifth and final AARMA Superpower is **Accountability** — owning our actions, learning from our choices, and using that learning to grow!

Accountability

Accountability isn't about blame or punishment. It's about helping little and mid-sized humans see that their choices have impact - on themselves, on others and on their environment.

When kids learn to take ownership, they begin to understand the powerful truth: "I can't always control or change what happened, but I can control what I do next." This mindset builds resilience, responsibility, and self-leadership - qualities that turn small humans into capable, compassionate big ones.

The science

The brain learns through cause and effect. Every time a child reflects on what happened and why, they're strengthening neural pathways linked to reasoning, empathy, and future planning — all functions of the **Wise Handler Brain** (prefrontal cortex).

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But when accountability feels like *shame*, the **Guard Dog Brain** takes over — triggering defensiveness, excuses, or avoidance. That's why traditional 'telling off' moments often backfire. The brain is protecting, not learning.

For accountability to stick, the environment needs to feel safe. When children know they can make a mistake and still be accepted, their brain stays open to reflection and growth.

Classroom (or home) activity

Primary (little humans):

Use 'Oops + Next Step' cards. Children write or draw something that didn't go as planned on one side and what they'll try next time on the other. Celebrate the learning, not the mistake.

Secondary (medium humans):

Ask students to reflect or journal: "When have I taken responsibility for something that didn't go well? What changed because I did?" Discuss how accountability builds trust and leadership.



Our job as big humans

Our job is to model accountability every day — to show that being responsible doesn't mean being flawless; it means being honest, reflective, and willing to repair.

Here's how we can help:

Model it out loud. "I snapped earlier — that wasn't helpful. I'm sorry, and here's what I'll do next time."

Avoid shame. Focus on behaviour, not identity. "That choice hurt someone" is different from "You're mean."

Ask reflection questions. "What happened?" "What were you hoping for?" "What will you try next time?"

Acknowledge growth. Notice and praise when they take ownership, even in small ways.

Each time we respond with calm curiosity, we show that accountability is empowering, not punishing.



**Helping our Little Humans grow into
BETTER Big Humans!**

Tips for educators, parents and carers

- Replace blame with curiosity: "What happened, and what can we learn from it?"
- Praise honesty and effort to repair — not just the outcome.
- Help kids repair relationships — saying sorry and making amends builds empathy.
- Celebrate small ownership moments: "You owned that mistake — that's maturity!"
- Model self-accountability daily — kids learn more from what we do than what we say.

Email us at info@better-me-project.com

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