MESSAGE TO ABC READERS

Try and Stick With It talks about flexibility and perseverance. Perseverance is a combination of assertiveness, courage, patience, determination and persistence. Children with a can do attitude learn that with perseverance they can accomplish and learn new things. Belief in the ability to change and grow is called a growth mindset. A growth mindset allows a person to view challenges as something new to learn. Having persistence will enable a young person to apply skills they have to new and difficult experiences. It also focuses on giving new things a try, enjoying the experience of trying and dealing with mastery over harder things to do.

Asset Information:

- #1: Family Support
- #3: Other Adult Relationships
- #16: Appropriate Expectations for Growth
- #30: Family Values Responsibility
- #32: Planning and Decision Making
- #37: Personal Power
- #38: Self Esteem
- #39: Sense of Purpose

LESSON

Conversation Starter:

Welcome students and tell them it is ABC Time and this is the last book of the year. Ask the students what they have been doing as bucket fillers or what intentional acts of caring they have done. Make a point to say that all these kind deeds should be done daily.

To engage the students, bring in something to do that is difficult for you – juggling balls, a yo-yo, knitting, roller blading, skate boarding, etc. Talk about trying to learn something new, but having trouble. Share a few steps you may have tried. Ask the students: Have you ever tried something even though you didn’t think you’d like it? What happened? Why is it sometimes hard to learn something new?

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Read the book
Today our book is *Try and Stick with It* by Cheri J. Meiners. Tell the students you think that this book will help us learn to learn a new skill. Explain that it will help them persevere. *Persevere means to keep practicing and working at something until you learn to do it.* Read the story, looking at what is happening on each page. Tell the students that you plan to persevere with your new activity from above. To help you all persevere, bring in a poster that has the Steps to Persevering written on it. (To make it interesting, you can cover up the steps with paper.) As you read about a step in the book, you can uncover the statement on the poster.

Discussion:
(You may want to read through the book once and then go back and ask the questions, or it may seem more natural to ask them as you go. In case they are having a hard time paying attention, the more important questions are in **bold text.**) Also have a poster with the Steps to Persevering to refer to.

1. **What things are easy for you?**
2. **Were they ever hard? Why are they easy now?**
3. **What are some things that need lots of practice?**
4. **What does it mean to imagine?** (In this case it might be good to have the children think in terms of “picturing yourself” or “making a picture in your head.” What is something you can imagine yourself doing now? When you’re older?)
5. **What can you tell yourself the next time something is hard?** Introduce the idea of positive self-talk. Positive self-talk is words you say to yourself to help you persevere: “I can do this.” “I need to keep trying.” “This is hard but I am capable.”
6. **Have you ever wanted to quit because something was really hard? Why is it important to keep trying? How does sticking with something help you get along with other people?**
7. **What is something you can help other people do?**
8. **What is something you worked hard to be able to do?**
9. **What is something you haven’t tried that you would like to try?**

**GROUP ACTIVITIES:**
Choose one of the following activities for the class.

**Try and Stick With It!**
Materials—Poster of Steps to Persevering, Some equipment you might need: tissue or handkerchiefs for juggling, jacks, balls, frisbees, hula hoops, yo-yos etc.

Set the tone for the activity as something fun to do for the sake of trying and doing, not mastering. The activity can be something adults teach students or students teach each other. If students will be the teachers for each other, ask the teacher to help you pair students with each other. Remind students to coach each other with the steps to Perseverance. Practice some of the steps such as taking a deep breath or a way to say time for a break.

- Ask students to show how they climb the jungle gym.
- Bring in small tissue or handkerchiefs to juggle. Add balls for advanced jugglers.
- Skipping, galloping, running and hopping are all fun ways to burn energy.

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Walk on the balance beam.
Throw and catch softballs, basketballs, footballs, frisbees, etc.
Play Hide ‘n Seek.
Do Tug-of-War.
Do headstands, somersaults, and cartwheels.
Find insects.
Play with hula hoops, jump ropes, or yo-yos.

Talk about the idea of trying something new. Was the activity easy or hard? Ask them what else they would like to try? Did you find a new interest that you would like to learn more about?

Option 2:
Set up stations with different activities at each station. Include artistic, fine and gross motor activities.

Role Play—Try and Stick With

Materials: Cards with different scenarios written on it, container for cards

Directions:
Have the students act out the following scenes.
• First have the students decide as a group if the scene describes someone trying. They can give a thumbs up or thumbs down.
• Next have the student act out how they would try and stick with it.
You can have students work in small groups or with partners.

Here are some suggested scenarios:
1. Tom got back on his bike after he fell.
2. After spilling the pitcher of water, Joe ran outside.
3. Kelsey decides not to go to school after her first day in First Grade.
4. Sue took 3 nights to draw a card for her grandmother.
5. Alex does his homework before watching TV.
6. Julianne decided to quit softball after striking out.
7. Justin practices swimming every day rain or shine.

I Can Attitude
Encourage students to use proactive language. Notice, name and celebrate their use of:
• I’ll try it or I’ll do it
• I can do better if I try again
• Let’s look at all our options
• I choose to
• There has to be a way
• Look for solutions

Have special I Can badges made that yard duty, teachers, principal, secretary etc., can pass out when proactive words are used.
If you hear reactive language, ask your students for ways to rephrase the statement and make it a proactive statement. Instead of saying, I can’t, rephrase with I wish I could or I want to try.

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21st Century Skills:
Here is a key to the 21st Century skills used in this lesson:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>21st Century Learning Skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
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</tbody>
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“We Keep Trying” Posters
Materials: Large drawing paper, markers or crayons

Directions:
Use some of the situations the students described as hard during the discussion. Ask the children what they would say to encourage someone who wanted to quit trying, and write down their ideas. This activity can also be done by talking about moving onto first grade. Then, have the children make posters that encourage everyone to try and stick with things that are difficult. Phrases might include “Hang in There”, “Never Give Up”, “Stick with It”, “Remember the Tortoise.” Talk about pictures they could use to decorate the posters with.

Perseverance Pictures
Preparation:
Find some pictures that show people involved in activities requiring perseverance.

Directions:
Show the pictures and ask the children what is happening. Then ask, “How do you think the person learned to do this?” Discuss different ways the person might have kept trying when things were hard or weren’t going well. Then ask the students to draw their own pictures of working hard to do something. Have them write their own sentences to say what is happening and how they persevered.

End of Year Wrap Up
Materials: Books you read this year

As a way to celebrate the ABC readings, bring in the books that were read throughout the year. Here are a few ideas of ways to close out the year:

Guess Which Book
Act out the lessons learned from each book and have the students guess which book it came from.

Vote for your Favorite Book
Have students fill out ballots, use craft sticks or straws, or raise hands to vote for their favorite book.