

My Cheer Squad - Levels C - D

GRATITUDE

To support the life skill of resilience by helping students recognise their own effort and celebrate the effort of others. Inspired by Uranus, this activity reinforces that trying again, even when things are tricky, is something to be proud of and that encouragement from others helps us grow stronger.



Learning Intentions



Students aim to reflect on something they have kept trying, even when it felt hard.

Students aim to practise sharing their effort and feeling proud of themselves.

Students aim to give kind encouragement and appreciation to others.



Success Criteria

I can name or show something I kept trying to do.

I can accept cheering or encouragement from others.

I can cheer for my classmates using words, gestures, or actions.



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Duration: 10 - 15 minutes

Objective

To support the life skill of resilience by helping students recognise their own effort and celebrate the effort of others. Inspired by Uranus, this activity reinforces that trying again, even when things are tricky, is something to be proud of and that encouragement from others helps us grow stronger.

Players

Whole class circle

Suitable for 4 - 26 students

What You Need

Clear, safe space for sitting in a circle
Soft object for turn-taking (e.g. ball, astronaut toy, cushion)
Optional: Cheer Chart or poster paper
Optional: stars or stickers/stamps for recognition
AAC devices or communication supports as required

Setup

1. Revisit the Uranus page from *The Playful Astronauts* using clear, supportive language:
 - "Uranus spins in a different way, but it keeps going."
 - "We keep going too, even when things feel hard."
2. Ask simple reflection questions with wait time:
 - "What is something that was tricky for you?"
 - "Did you keep trying?"
3. Explain the activity clearly:
 - "We will take turns sharing something we tried hard to do."
 - "After each share, we will cheer and encourage each other."
4. Explain that students may pass if they do not want to share today.



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Gameplay

Step 1: Sharing in the Circle

1. Students sit in a circle.
2. The teacher models first by sharing a simple example:
 - "I kept trying when something was tricky for me."
3. Pass the soft object around the circle.
4. When holding the object, students may:
 - Say what they kept trying
 - Show a drawing or symbol
 - Use AAC to share
 - Whisper to an adult for them to narrate
 - Pass on their turn

Examples students may share:

- "I kept trying to build my tower."
- "I kept trying to zip my jacket."
- "I kept trying to stay calm."

Step 2: The Cheer Squad

After each share, the group gives encouragement. Choose one or two cheer options and keep them consistent:

- Clapping
- Thumbs up
- Jazz hands
- Saying together: "Well done!" or "You kept trying!"

Model respectful and positive cheering.

Step 3: Group Appreciation

At the end, say together:

- "Thank you for cheering for me."
- "We are each other's cheer squad."

Optional: Students place their name or a star on a Cheer Chart to show participation.

Winning the Game

There are no winners or losers.

Everyone succeeds when they try, share in their own way, and encourage others.



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Sensory-Specific Learner Variation

Purpose: Support emotional safety and regulation.

Adjustments may include:

- Smaller group sharing instead of whole class
- Quiet cheering (silent claps, hands on heart)
- Visual cue cards for cheering choices
- Allowing students to share privately with an adult
- Using predictable routines and language

Students may observe without participating and still be included as part of the cheer squad.

AAC-Specific Supports

1. Prepare AAC Vocabulary

- try, again, hard, proud, clap, happy, good job

2. Model AAC Use

- Teacher models: “try again” or “good job”

3. Student Sharing Options

- Selecting symbols or phrases
- Partner-assisted scanning
- Single-message buttons (e.g. “I tried”)

4. Cheering with AAC

- Students use AAC to say “Well done” or “Good job” for peers

All AAC communication is acknowledged and celebrated.

Accessibility and Inclusion Notes

- Ensure the circle allows space for mobility aids.
- Accept verbal, AAC, gesture-based, or visual sharing equally.
- Do not force sharing or eye contact.
- Celebrate effort, not comparison or outcomes.
- Reinforce that every try matters, big or small.

Teacher Notes

“My Cheer Squad – Levels C & D” builds a strong culture of encouragement and emotional safety. By normalising challenge and celebrating effort, students learn that resilience grows when people support one another. Linked to Uranus, this activity reinforces that doing things differently and continuing to try is something worth cheering for every time.