

Ideas for Parents

Building Your Child's Self Esteem

Self-esteem refers to how a person feels about himself or herself. Our self-esteem is determined by our relationships with other people.

Children With High Self-Esteem	Children With Low Self-Esteem
Are willing to try new things	Feel unacceptable, incompetent and unlikable
Have faith in their abilities	Are fearful of new interactions and situations
Are willing to make decisions	Are shy or overly aggressive
Are willing to take risks	Lack faith in their abilities
Are independent	Can be dependent on adults to do things for them.
Feel confident	Lack autonomy
Have leadership qualities	Follower

How to Build Self-Esteem

To establish a sense of security:

- Let your child know what kind of behaviour you expect from him or her.
- Enforce your rules consistently in ways that build responsibility.
- Build feelings of trust.
- Help your child feel safe.

To build a sense of identity or a positive self-concept:

- Treat your child as an important person.
- Provide love and acceptance.
- Increase your child's awareness of his or her strengths.
- Spend quality time with your child.

To create a sense of belonging:

- Build close family relationships.
- Teach your child how to be a group member.
- Encourage service to others.

To develop a sense of purpose:

- Have expectations for your child.
- Help your child set realistic goals.
- Demonstrate faith and confidence in your child.
- Expand your child's interests and talents.
- Set up reward systems when your child needs incentives.

To achieve a sense of personal competence:

- Help your child develop a plan of action for the goals that have been set.
- Provide encouragement and support.
- Give your child feedback regarding progress being made.

How Can Parents Help?

- Listen to what your child is saying.
- Accept your child's thoughts and feelings.
- Share your thoughts and feelings with your child, for example: "When I was a little girl, I felt nervous and scared during thunderstorms."
- Don't use put-downs, for example: "You're so dumb!" Instead, separate the deed from the doer, for example: "I like you but I didn't like what you did."
- Share your mistakes in a positive way with your child. Talking about some of your difficulties and sharing how you resolved these situations teaches your child that problems can be solved.
- Praise your child for their strengths, for example: "Great job!" "Terrific!" "Congratulations! You do that very well."
- Let your child help you. Show appreciation for their contributions, for example: "It's wonderful to have such a good helper."
- Encourage your child to make positive statements about himself or herself, for example: "I'm a really good soccer player," or "When I try hard I can do it."