

HOW TO HELP BUILD YOUR CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM

Take a minute and think: if you could give one and only one gift to your child, what would it be? Would it be intelligence, beauty, or maybe financial security? According to many studies, the most precious gift a parent or grandparent can give is a home environment that allows children to build a high self-esteem. Possessing a healthy self-esteem can help children throughout their lifetime.

What is self-esteem?

It could be defined as the internal awareness of a person's self worth, self-confidence, or the belief we hold about ourselves. These feelings of self worth are with us for a lifetime. Self-esteem can be built through some simple ways. A couple of steps that could be taken are:

- Make sure your children know you love them, even when they make a mistake.
- Encourage your children. Praise their achievements and talents. Recognize the skills they are developing, but do not overpraise. Relationships are built on the small moments of life. Looking for perfection in others is unrealistic.
- Teach respect by modeling it for the children. Teaching respect is a long process, so arm yourself with patience and be persistent. This way you can demand respect while you show respect, and teach your child that some behaviors are acceptable while others are not.
- Set limits. Discipline and limit setting build self-esteem in kids. Consistent parenting helps too.
- Spend time with your children. Try to do things that you both enjoy, and listen to your children. Play will offer you the opportunity to learn more about your children and yourself. Playtime gives your child the message "You are worth my time. You are a valuable person." It is well known that children learn through play, which improves a child's behavior by giving him/her feelings of importance and accomplishment. Instead of viewing playtime as a chore, use it to make an investment in your child's behavior.
- Put a picture of your child with family members in your child's bedroom. This is a subtle reminder to your child that he/she has family support and they are not alone in the world. Many children really do feel that way.
- You can have a fun game like exchanging complimentary sticky notes with your child that enhances their self esteem:
 - Peter, I like the way you...
 - Emma, you are special because...
 - Alex, you are good at

Give your child responsibilities. One of the ways you can help your child develop self confidence is by giving them household duties that make them feel valuable. Do not underestimate your children.

Here is a list of tasks that children typically can do according to their age. Remember that not all children learn and develop at the same rate, so you may need to adjust your expectations for each child:

Ages 2 - 3: Put away toys
Help set the table

Ages 4 - 5: Feed Pets
Help with yard work

Ages 6 - 7: Help clear the table after meals
Pour own drinks and get snacks
Empty waste baskets

Ages 8 - 9: Sweep or vacuum floor
Help wash dishes
Take trash out

Ages 10 – 11: Help prepare snacks and easy meals
Mow lawn with supervision
Clean Kitchen

Ages 12 – 14: Grocery Shop
Prepare a dinner meal
Clean Bathrooms

Source of information: Love our children <http://www.loveourchildrenusa.org>



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