

Building Your Child's Self-Esteem

15 Ways to Help Children Like Themselves



1. Reward children. Give praise, recognition, a special privilege, or increased responsibility for a job well done. Emphasize the good things they do, not the bad.
2. Take their ideas, emotions, and feelings seriously. Don't belittle them by saying, "You'll grow out of it" or "It's not as bad as you think."
3. Define limits and rules clearly and enforce them, but do allow leeway for your children within these limits.
4. Be a good role model. Let your children know that you feel good about yourself. Also let them see that you, too, can make mistakes and can learn from them.
5. Teach your children how to deal with time and money. Help them spend time wisely and budget their money carefully.
6. Have reasonable expectations for your children. Help them set reasonable goals so they can achieve success.
7. Help your children develop tolerance toward those with different values, backgrounds, and norms. Point out other people's strengths.
8. Give your children responsibility. They will feel useful and valued.
9. Be reasonable. Give support when children need it.
10. Show them that what they do is important to you. Talk with them about their activities and interests. Go to their games, parents' day at school, drama presentations, and awards ceremonies.
11. Express your values, but go beyond "do this" or "I want you to do that." Describe the experiences that determined your values, the decisions you made to accept certain beliefs, and the reasons behind your feelings.
12. Spend time together. Share favorite activities.
13. Discuss problems without placing blame or commenting on a child's character. If children know that there is a problem but don't feel attacked, they are more likely to help look for a solution.
14. Use phrases that build self-esteem, such as "Thank you for helping" or "That was an excellent idea!" Avoid phrases that hurt self-esteem: "Why are you so stupid?" "How many times have I told you?"
15. Show how much you care about them. Hug them. Tell them they are terrific and that you love them.

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