

Fostering Self-Esteem in Children



How children feel about themselves and see themselves in their world is so important. Positive self-esteem begins in infancy with a strong attachment. By responding to their cues, children feel safe and secure to explore the world around them. Providing children with the tools to build their self-esteem helps them to be confident, independent people.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Provide structures and rules.** Let your child know what you expect from them and what the consequences will be if they do not follow the rules. Knowing what to expect makes children feel safe, secure and confident.
- **Mistakes are okay, we learn from them!** Let your child know that we all make mistakes and that is how we learn. Let them see you make mistakes and talk about what you could do differently next time.
- **Focus on the process, not the outcome.** Your child could spend 10 minutes building a block tower just to have it come crashing down before they finish. Don't emphasize the fact that the tower fell down, instead focus on the time and concentration they put into building it.
- **Show empathy and understanding.** Not everything will come easy and that's okay! Some tasks are difficult and will take more practice. It may be easier to pour the milk in their cereal for them (less mess and quicker) but the more opportunities they have to practice, the more confident and independent they will become in their abilities.
- **Practice, practice, practice.** Children will need to practice the same tasks over and over again. Be patient, and avoid trying to take over. While it may seem repetitive to you, it is critical for development.
- **Offer praise, but don't over praise.** Be specific with your praise. Avoid general statements like "good job." Instead, focus on what they did that you liked "I really liked that you brought your dishes to the sink after your snack." Sometimes if we praise every little accomplishment, children look for the praise rather than the joy in their own success.

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- **Let them take risks.** Children need to take chances and understand failure. You will not succeed at everything you do the first time you do it. Be there to support them when they are unsuccessful. Offer words of encouragement and inspire them to not give up.
- **Provide responsibilities at home.** Assign chores that they are able to help with. Contributing to the household makes them feel important and gives a sense of purpose. Make sure the responsibilities are developmentally appropriate.
- **Be a Role Model. Let your child(ren) see you try new things!** Show them your successes and failures. Let them see how you deal with challenging situations. Model how to show self-love and reflection.