



Promoting the Development of Self-Esteem in Your Children

Self-esteem is what we think and feel about ourselves. It is our self-evaluation. It relates to our qualities, capabilities, and the way we view ourselves, including our self-concept.

- Self-concept includes our talents and our needs, feeling good about ourselves, as well as believing in our ability to overcome and learn from obstacles.
- Helping children develop healthy self-esteem relates to assisting students in gathering evidence that supports the idea that they are competent and capable.
- One of our goals as parents is to help our children lead productive lives. Helping your children to feel reasonably good about themselves, their skills, talents and their abilities is a big part of that goal.
- When children make mistakes, they need supportive adults that unconditionally love them, but do not rescue them. Learning from experience teaches children to solve problems and express confidence in their abilities to solve future challenges.
- Overall, children need to know that they are competent, capable, cared for, and valued.
- One of the best ways to demonstrate this is through the gift of time.

What Parents Can Do to Help Their Children Develop Positive Self-Esteem?

Let your children know that they are accepted, loved, and liked.

1. Children need to know that they matter and that you will always love them.
2. Promote a healthy, realistic body image for your children. Help your children to accept and respect their developing body.

One of the best ways for parents to send a message that they value them is to spend time doing an activity of the child's choice.

1. Children need to know that they are valued because of the relationships parents have with them, not because of a perfect math score, wonderful artwork, or the number of passes they caught in a ball game.
2. Parents can raise their children's self-esteem by being present in their lives. **Remember, it's your presence not your presents.**

Teaching your children problem-solving skills will raise their self-esteem.

1. Rescuing children from mistakes, or blaming others, tends to inadvertently teach children that they are not capable of solving their problems.
2. Children who are not held accountable for mistakes do not have the opportunity for developing problem-solving capabilities. They may blame others or wait to be rescued.

Praise your children in ways that acknowledge their efforts, not just their outcomes.

1. Instead of, “Great work!” say, “I liked the way you took your time on this project. Your ideas are excellent and your illustrations help me to understand your focus.”
2. “I like the way you cleaned your room. You put your clothes away and made your bed neatly.”

Adapted from Young, E. and L. Hoffman. NASP Publications.