

PARENT TALK



Parents and teachers can raise children's self-esteem

Learn about child development so that your views of childhood are based on facts about children's growth and development.

- Expectations are very powerful; base your expectations on what is appropriate for children at particular ages or stages.
- Communicate your confidence in your children by believing in them.
- Say something encouraging or complimentary to your children every day.
- Allow children to make mistakes and tolerate their less-than-perfect efforts at new tasks or challenges.
- Permit children to be involved in a variety of activities and roles.
- Let children be part of the group and follow the normal fads of their peers.
- Reward behaviors you want to see repeated.
- Find and emphasize the positive in children's behavior – even when a behavior or task has not been totally successful.
- Ignore errors that are minor and will change with growth and experience.
- Show affection through physical contact.
- Tell children in words that you love them.
- Praise in public, but reprimand in private.
- Use rewards rather than criticism.
- Participate and/or be present for the special events in children's lives—no matter how minor the child's role might be.
- A parent or a teacher cannot praise or encourage too much.
- Be aware of where your expectations for your children come from. Their needs? Or your own past experience?
- Learn how to let every one of your children feel special to you.
- Don't push or compel children to grow in the way you need them to grow.
- Allow children to have plateaus, setbacks, or regressions.
- Help children feel lovable and worthwhile.
- Gradually introduce children to new experiences to help prevent them from developing fears.
- Don't feel compelled to lecture or teach lessons at every opportunity.

Handling feelings

- Acknowledge what your children are feeling, even if you don't feel the same way.
- Avoid mixed messages when dealing with your children.
- Be honest when communicating.
- Do not judge, blame or criticize your children for their feeling.
- Allow children to express negative as well as positive feelings.
- Learn to send non-judgmental messages by using "I" messages, rather than "you" messages.
- Allow children to "own" their feelings and be themselves with their own thoughts, ideas and feelings.
- Learn to empathize with children's feelings.
- Train yourself to be a good listener to children and their feelings.
- Encourage your child to talk about their feelings.
- Learn to handle your own feelings first before dealing with children's feelings.
- If children fail at a task, help them understand the ways they have been successful, and that by trying again, failure turns to success.

Handling discipline

- Making children feel small, inadequate, or unworthy damages self-esteem.
- Learn to encourage rather than criticize or use put-downs.
- The purpose of discipline is to help children learn to discipline themselves.
- All discipline should help children like themselves better.
- Help children to solve problems for themselves.
- Trust your children based on your study of child development.
- Use discipline techniques that build confidence and encourage.
- Assist children in understanding that although you may dislike some specific behavior, you still love them.

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