

Building Your Child's Self Esteem: Parent Guidelines

Be positive. Look for and reward specific positive behaviors. Use praise, recognition, or special privileges. Try to keep a ratio of 4 positive interactions for every 1 negative.

Urge creativity. Teach original thinking by drawing out problem solving abilities. Praise effort, and help mistakes become stepping stones.

Involve yourself in your child's activities and interests. Talk with your child about school, friends, and hobbies. Attend school plays, parent-teacher night, recitals and sporting events.

Listen to your child and discuss problems without attacking. Make "I" statements about your feelings. Avoid blaming, sarcasm, ridicule, put-downs, or lectures. Help your child look for solutions.

Define rules limits, and consequences. Give structure and support to your child. List specific expectations. Say what you mean. Mean what you say.

Set a good example. Show your child that you feel good about yourself. Make positive self statements. Take care of your health.

Express your values. Let your child know the reasons behind your feelings, values, decisions and beliefs. Avoid repeatedly saying, "because I said so!"

Laugh and play. Don't take yourself too seriously. Maintain optimism. Encourage a sense of humor in your child. Smile often.

Focus on family time together. Develop a supportive family environment. Schedule time for family activities and discussions. Build family memories. Set aside one-to-one time with each child.

Empathize. Get into your child's "shoes". Try to understand your child's point of view, regardless of whether you agree with it.

Show how much you love your child. Don't assume that children know they are loved. Tell them. Children never outgrow the need for hugs and affection.

Teach responsibility. The ultimate goal for a parent is to get the child to be accountable for his/her actions. Teach your child to accept consequences for behaviors. Be consistent in applying consequences.

Expect only what is reasonable. Know your child's abilities based on age and development. Try not to over or under estimate your child's skills.

Encourage time and money management. Help your child plan and organize school work, leisure time, allowance, etc.

Monitor your child's television viewing. Don't use TV as a babysitter. Limit TV time. Discuss implied values. Use TV as an educational tool.