



Enriching Lives

## 15 WAYS TO DEVELOP SELF-ESTEEM IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

1. Demonstrate a positive perspective rather than a negative one. “Catch” your children doing something good. This communicates love, care, acceptance, and appreciation. Be careful not to undo a positive statement. For example, “you did a great job cleaning your room, too bad you don’t do it more often.”
2. Keep your promises. This facilitates trust in parents, while they are role modeling being respectful and responsible. Consistency is important.
3. Create opportunities out of your children’s mistakes. For example, “what did you learn? What would be helpful next time?”
4. Show appreciation, approval, and acceptance. Listen for the feelings behind the words. Active listening to what a child says shows respect and is a way to reflect their worthiness. Being genuinely interested fosters mutual care and respect.
5. Have reasonable and appropriate consequences. Discipline should be a part of learning and encouraging responsible behavior. If a consequence is too long or severe it creates feelings of hopelessness, and a feeling that they have nothing to lose. As a result, it is likely to lead to more opposition and acting out.
6. Ask your children for their opinions, involve them in family problem solving and decision making whenever possible and appropriate.
7. Help your children develop reasonable age-appropriate goals for themselves and help them recognize their progress toward goals.
8. Avoid making comparisons between siblings or peers. Each person is unique and has something special to offer. Recognizing individual attributes is a good thing because it helps a child or adolescent to become more aware of their strengths or assets.
9. Support your children in activities in which they feel accomplished and successful. Everyone feels good about themselves when they are successful.
10. Spend time doing things with your children. The amount of time as well as the quality of time is important. Remember, your children grow quickly and time that has past can never be recaptured. Be sure to take time to have fun and enjoy your children.
11. Encourage your children’s efforts and accomplishments. Genuine encouragement of efforts, progress, and accomplishments promotes positive self-esteem. Children learn to accept themselves, identify their assets and strengths, build self-confidence and develop a positive self-image.
12. Communicate your love by saying it and demonstrating it. Feeling loved is feeling secure. Love is communicated by mutual respect, which is a cornerstone in the development of independence and responsibility.
13. Accept your children for who they are. This facilitates self-acceptance, self-love and self-love.
14. Have faith in your children so that they can learn to expect the best in themselves.
15. Focus on contributions, assets, and strengths so that children feel that they are important and have something to offer. Let them know what they offer counts.

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