

20 Tips to Promote Positive Self-esteem

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A dynamic relationship exists between self-esteem and skill development. As a child improves in self-esteem, his academic competence increases. And as that competence increases, his self-esteem improves. The caring and concerned caregiver must come to realize that positive self-esteem is both a prerequisite and a consequence of academic success. Here are 20 tips to help foster a child's self-esteem:

- 1) Value each child as an individual with unique strengths, needs, interests and skills.
- 2) Focus on the child's strengths. Emphasize and celebrate his "islands of competence."
- 3) Reject the child's behavior, but never reject the child. Use affectionate terms and nicknames when scolding ("Your room is a mess, honey. Now turn off the TV and make your bed.").
- 4) Remember that sincere interest can be more effective and meaningful than praise. Demonstrate a genuine interest in her activities, hobbies, etc.
- 5) Establish realistic, achievable goals for your child. Anticipate success.
- 6) Avoid using sarcasm with kids - children with language problems often misinterpret it.
- 7) When discussing an issue or a problem, avoid bringing up past difficulties.
- 8) Never compare one child to another.
- 9) Help the child develop decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- 10) Understand that mistakes are an inevitable (and valuable!) part of any learning experience. Use these as an opportunity to teach and assist.
- 11) Divide large tasks into smaller, manageable ones. This will ensure success, mastery, and retention.
- 12) Maintain a file of his academic work. Use this to demonstrate his progress and development when he is feeling down.
- 13) Encourage him to maintain "collections" (e.g., baseball cards, stamps, rocks, etc.). This allows him to be the resident expert on a topic.
- 14) If she does not participate in team sports, promote individual sports (e.g., skiing, golf, swimming). This will provide opportunities for success, exercise, and peer interaction.
- 15) Communicate your confidence in the child and in her future.
- 16) Permit and encourage the child to follow the normal fads of his peer group (e.g., clothing, music). This will enhance his acceptance at school and in the community.
- 17) Emphasize the positive aspects of her behavior or performance, even if the task was not completely successful. Reward direction, not perfection.
- 18) Anticipate that the child will have plateaus, failures, backslides, setbacks, and regressions. Support and encourage him at these times. Kids need love most when they deserve it least!
- 19) Look for opportunities to offer him choices to allow him to practice decision-making skills.
- 20) Never, ever, communicate disappointment to your child. The disappointment of an adult may be too great a burden for a child to carry.

Remember:

- Your child's self-esteem will be determined by the conditional acceptance that he receives from others - and the unconditional acceptance that he receives from you and
- Your child's self-esteem will be determined by success and progress in four areas:
 - Social (acceptance, friendships)
 - Competence (in a skill area)
 - Physical (clothing, attractiveness)
 - Character (effort, generosity, etc.)

Emphasize, recognize and reinforce all four areas!

