

HOW DO I...

Help my child build healthy self-esteem?

Advice for Parents and Caregivers

- **Show your child your love every day — not just with words but with your presence.** Put down your phone, snuggle up with a story, and let them feel your full attention.
- **Share your family's values — kindness, respect, courage — not as rules but as guiding principles for a strong character.** Help them understand how these values can shape their choices and make them proud of who they are.
- **Expose your child to a variety of activities.** Kids learn best by doing lots of different things, like playing music, getting active, or making art. When you show them lots of options and cheer them on, they discover what they're good at and develop their strengths and talents.
- **Encourage your child to seek meaningful, but attainable, goals.** Avoid challenges that are too easy (which can lead to boredom) or too difficult (which can make them discouraged). A healthy balance fosters a growth mindset.
- **Focus on the effort and the journey.** Instead of praising a child's natural abilities ("You're so smart!"), recognize and celebrate their hard work ("You tackled that math problem with amazing focus!"). This shift highlights the value of dedication and improvement.



Scan to watch our
video on this topic.

7 Tips for Raising Confident Kids

1. **Model confidence yourself.** Even if you're not quite feeling it! Seeing you prepare for new tasks and tackle them with optimism sets a good example for kids.
2. **Don't get upset about mistakes.** Help kids see that everyone makes mistakes. The important thing is to learn from them and not dwell on them.
3. **Praise perseverance.** Learning not to give up when you get frustrated or bail on a goal after one setback is an important life skill. Encourage kids to stick with challenging tasks and projects.
4. **Help kids find their passion.** Exploring their own interests helps kids develop a sense of identity, which is essential to building confidence. And of course, seeing their talents grow will also boost their self-esteem.
5. **Celebrate effort.** Let kids know you value the work they're doing, whether they're toddlers building with blocks or teenagers teaching themselves to play the guitar.
6. **Expect them to pitch in.** They might complain, but kids feel valued when they're counted on to do age-appropriate jobs, like picking up toys, doing dishes, or for teens, picking up a younger sibling from a play date.
7. **Show your love, no matter what.** Win or lose, good grades or bad, and even when you're mad at them — make sure your child knows that you think they're great. It will build their self-worth even when they're struggling.

To learn more, check out these helpful resources:

[Building Blocks for Healthy Self-Esteem in Kids](#)
HealthyChildren.org

[12 Tips for Raising Confident Kids](#)
The Child Mind Institute

[Ways to Build Strong Self-Esteem in Your Child](#)
VeryWell Family

The Child Mind Institute is dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders by giving them the help they need to thrive. We've become the leading independent nonprofit in children's mental health by providing gold-standard care, delivering educational resources to millions of families each year, training educators in underserved communities, and developing tomorrow's breakthrough treatments.