

## Building Confidence

Is your child confident and reaching his/her full potential?



Children with healthy self-esteem and self-confidence learn more, achieve more, have more friends, are confident in social settings, enjoy individual pursuits, when challenges arise are able to work toward finding solutions, are generally happier and have a greater chance of reaching their potential.

How can we help children develop self esteem and confidence?

- Ensure your child has plenty of exercise as it relieves stress, builds strength and helps create a healthy toned body and mind.
- Help your child to set and reach goals and talk about the feelings attached to the achievements and the struggle along the way.
- Praise a job well done and praise the effort - families that work well, praise one another, compliments are given freely; family culture is positive and optimism is in the air!
- Develop a sense of competence by allowing and expecting your child to complete tasks they are capable of i.e. carrying own school bag to the classroom, unpacking the dishwasher, feeding pets, doing daily household chores/tasks and for teens managing their phone credit, catching buses independently, doing daily household chores/tasks, being responsible for areas in the home etc.
- Address sibling put downs and make your home a put down free zone. Teach your child about positive self talk if/when he/she suffers negative comments from peers. Make it clear that the person making the negative comment is the one with the problem. Perhaps there will be a conclusion as to why the other person is negative. They may be suffering themselves in some way.
- Help your child find out what they are passionate about, what they are good at and ensure time is available for this special talent/interest. Identification of an area of special interest will spill over into other areas of life - this is the 'carry over principle' - succeeding in one activity boosts a child's self-image, and this carries over into other endeavours.
- Set your child up with a Challenging Project and give them responsibility - an extreme example of this is the story that Richard Branson, the billionaire founder of Virgin records and Virgin Airlines, tells of what he calls the Impossible Project given to him by his mother.

Young Richard was driven across London at the age of four and told to get out of the car. His mother turned to him and asked him if he thought he could find his way home, to which he replied, "I think so". Richard's mother then left him there and told him she'd see him for supper and drove off! Yet sure enough, 10 hours later young Richard made it home for supper — at 4 years of age! This example is not one we advocate due to the obvious safety concerns but rather an example to get us thinking about possibilities.....perhaps give your older child a budget and ask them to plan a family holiday to include flights, transport, tours etc or take your younger child with a friend or sibling to an area of bush and challenge them to create a shelter which would be water-proof. Test with buckets of water!

- Find opportunities for your child to help others as this increases connectedness and value in oneself.
- The most valuable thing you can give your child (we are including adolescents of course) is your time. This is non-distracted, totally focussed time with your child and their interests. It says to your child that they are valued and loved. Eye contact, touch and focussed attention builds a child's self esteem.
- Don't expect your child to excel in sports or music or academics just because you did. The one thing your child can excel in is being himself/herself. They must know that your love does not depend on your approval of his/her performance.

#### **Further reading**

[www.andrewfuller.com.au](http://www.andrewfuller.com.au)

<http://www.kidspot.com.au/category/parenting/>

[www.parentingideas.com.au](http://www.parentingideas.com.au)

<http://parentingteens.about.com/od/agesandstages/a/responsibility.htm>

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