

# Building Children's Self-Esteem

By Jan Gordon

## Look at Each Child as a Unique Person

Make every effort not to compare a child with siblings or classmates. Focus on the countless assets rather than what the child does not have. De-emphasize competition. Accept the child for what he or she is rather than what you want him or her to be. Be supportive of his or her interests.

## Keep Expectations Realistic

Be in line with the basic facts of child development. Fit expectations with children's ages, temperaments, and backgrounds. Be careful not to base your expectations on your unfulfilled wishes and values rather than the children's wants and needs. Avoid using children to increase your status. Help children to set realistic goals for themselves.

## Give the Freedom to Make Mistakes

Help children develop the courage to be imperfect. Don't be defeated by mistakes. Learn from the experience. Teach children problem solving skills so they can continue to try. Instead of focusing on the errors, encourage children.

## Build In Success

Create situations where failure is unlikely by breaking down tasks into a series of easy steps and communicating them clearly and concisely. Provide opportunities for training. Give children a chance to contribute in their particular area of competency.

## Give Encouragement

Recognize efforts and improvements rather than waiting to praise completed tasks. Focus on children's assets and strengths and encourage self-appreciation and positive self-talk.

## Accept Children's Unpleasant Feelings and Teach Them How to Deal With Them

All feelings can be accepted. Certain actions must be limited. Take their ideas, emotions, and feelings seriously. Give feedback that makes a clear distinction between the behaviour and the person.



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Family Resource Centre

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## Give Choices

Children will not develop a sense of ownership and responsibility if other people always decide what they will do and when and how they will do it. Real choices, appropriate to children's ages, also permit them to experiment, make mistakes, and learn in non-threatening situations.

## Give Responsibility And Expect Cooperation

Give children opportunities to help with tasks around the house. Take care never, on a regular basis, do for your children what they can do for themselves.

## Keep Your Sense of Humour

Encourage children to see the humorous side of events. Be careful not to appear to be laughing at them.



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