

7 WAYS A CHILD BUILDS SELF-ESTEEM

Helping your child build self-esteem

is a balancing act. Sometimes you want to step back and other times you want to fight his or her battles.

The best way to help your child grow up to be confident is by encouraging your son or daughter to pursue experiences that make him or her feel capable, effective and accepted. That means sometimes your child will tackle challenges and win and other times he or she will fail. But struggles and failures can build self-esteem too.

Help your child build confidence by encouraging your son or daughter to:

1. **Take healthy risks.** Risks help your child stretch and grow. Allow your child to figure out problems, make choices and experience the results.
2. **Develop competence.** Encourage your child to explore and develop interests and talents. To progress, your child should stick with what he or she started.
3. **Set realistic goals.** It's OK for your child to go big with his or her dreams, but the goal must be within reach. A short person will probably not make the NBA, regardless of how many hours he or she has practiced.
4. **Earn praise.** When praise is appropriate it can make your child feel like a million dollars. Too often children are overpraised, which lowers the bar. Praise your child's effort or achievement and not his or her worth. For example, don't tell your son he is awesome; tell him you loved how he achieved his goal of all As.
5. **Help at home.** Asking your child to help out at home can build a sense of responsibility. Make him or her feel valued and channel energy into desirable behavior. Whether a toddler or a teen, every child can help set the table, collect dirty clothes for the washer and pick up around the house.
6. **Make choices.** Allow your child to make age-appropriate choices and live with his or her consequences.
7. **Know your love is unconditional.** Your child will make mistakes. But when your child fails to meet your expectations, your son or daughter needs to know you will continue to support and love him or her.

Remember, you can't give your child self-esteem. But you can provide the guidance and tools to help your son or daughter build confidence.

