



# Points for Parents

## Youth & Self-Esteem

Self-Esteem is the value we place on ourselves and the feelings associated with how we see ourselves. Self-Esteem is the belief that we are lovable, capable, and unique.

Positive self-esteem means:

- Having a healthy view of yourself.
- Has a sense of self-worth
- Have a positive outlook
- Feels satisfied with yourself most of the time
- Set realistic personal goals.

### Resources

- Barbara Coloroso "Kids are worth it!"  
[www.kidsareworthit.com](http://www.kidsareworthit.com)
- Children and Self-Esteem Fact Sheet:  
[www.cmha.ca/BINScontent\\_page.asp?cid=2-29-68](http://www.cmha.ca/BINScontent_page.asp?cid=2-29-68)
- Kids Health:  
[http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelingsself\\_esteem.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelingsself_esteem.html)  
[#a How Parents Can Help](#)



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- **Love and Acceptance.** Showing children that they are loved and accepted simply because they exist is the first and most important step of building a healthy self-esteem.
- **A Sense of Belonging.** Children need to know that they are important. To help children develop that sense of belonging, you can: help them build valuable family and community relationships; encourage pride in their family's ethnic background and heritage; keep reminders of family events and family history around the home.
- **Security and Safety.** A sense of security allows children to try new things and to learn about themselves.
- **Trust.** A stable environment provides children a sense of security. To build trust: be consistent; be sure of your verbal and non-verbal messages agree; be honest about your feelings; treat each child fairly.
- **Respect.** Children develop respect for themselves and others if they learn what they think, feel and do is important. Accept their feelings; show respect for their feeling; make "I feel" or "I believe" statements.
- **Confidence.** It is important to give children support and approval. Encourage them to face challenges and take risks; teach them to make decisions and set goals; express faith and confidence in them and their capabilities; provide opportunities for them to take responsibility for their actions; help them recognize that there are things they must accept and things they can choose to change; give them an opportunity to succeed.

### Compliments and Praise for Effort

- I really like the way you tried all different ways and found one that worked.
- I'm really happy for you - you worked really hard on the ice today.
- I like the way you took on a hard task. I like the way you stuck to it.
- You're stretching yourself. You're trying new things.
- I like the way you used colours.
- That drawing makes me happy. Tell me about it.

### How Parents Can Help

- **Watch what you say.** Remember to praise your child not only for a job well done, but for also for effort. For example, "Well, you didn't make the team, but I'm really proud of the effort you put into it." Reward effort and completion instead of outcome.
- **Be a positive role model.** Nurture your own self-esteem, and your child will have a great role model.
- **Be spontaneous and affectionate.** Give hugs and tell your children you're proud of them. Pop a note in your child's lunchbox that reads, "I think you're terrific!"
- **Give positive, accurate feedback.** A statement like, "You were really mad at your brother. But I appreciate that you didn't yell at him or hit him" acknowledges a child's feelings, rewards the choice made, and encourages the child to make the right choice again.
- **Create a safe, loving home environment.**
- **Help kids become involved in constructive experiences.** Activities that encourage cooperation rather than competition are helpful in fostering self-esteem.

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