

Boost Your Child's Self Confidence

It's no secret that self confidence is one of the main keys to success. When we feel good about ourselves our energy projects outwards and attracts others. Confidence can be the difference that gets us that job or promotion. Confidence is also very important in social interactions; confident people are perceived as fun, dynamic, and engaging, while self-conscious people are seen as shy, withdrawn, and even aloof. Like most things in life, real confidence is hard won. Today's society presents so many pitfalls and confidence-sapping situations for our kids. Superficial media and judgmental peers are only two of the obstacles kids face on a daily basis. We can't protect our kids from everything, but there are a few things we can do to prepare and bolster them.

Encourage your child's natural talents: Every child has natural gifts; it's up to us as parents to encourage them. Children are not mini-me's. Just because you love football, doesn't mean your child will. Today's society offers so many activities and classes that you're bound to stumble onto something your child loves and excels at. You may have to try a few different things, but finding something that allows your child to shine will greatly benefit you both.

Be a cheerleader: We're all looking for acceptance and approval, and your child is no different. Whatever it is that your child enjoys doing, make the time to be his/her #1 fan. He/she may act embarrassed, but he's secretly happy for the support.

Set reasonable goals: You know your child's capabilities better than anyone. Work with your child to set attainable goals-both academic and extracurricular- and provide daily encouragement. Without goals, your child may never understand or attain his/her potential.

Let your child express him/herself: Clothes, music, and hairstyles are all ways in which people express themselves. As long as your child isn't offending anyone or putting themselves in danger (ie profane/degrading music, micro-mini skirts, or visible underwear), let them be themselves. Forbidding children from having control over their outward appearance solves nothing and will only make your child angry and resentful. Children go through phases, and although you may not like your daughter's blue hair or your son's torn jeans, understand that "this, too, will pass", and you cannot force your child to be something he/she isn't. Keeping the lines of communication open is the most important thing; if your child fears your disapproval or rejection, he/she will find it difficult to come to you when they're hurt or need help. If your child is obsessed with angry music, it's more important to find out why they feel so angry than to get it off his Ipod.