

# Boosting self-confidence when children really struggle

**The hardest aspect of parenting** is watching your children struggle, whether they are dealing with personal, friendship or learning problems. Our natural reaction is to protect children or fix things when they have difficulty. Sometimes no matter what we say, or do, our children experience crises of confidence.

Disappointments and difficulties are part of life and children grow stronger when they overcome their difficulties. The challenge for parents is to build and maintain children's confidence enough to help them get through the rough times.

It helps to talk through a problem or incident recognising and accepting their feelings. Talk about various scenarios around the problem at hand, discussing the possible outcomes. The age of the child will determine the amount of detail you will be able to go into. Avoid burdening a younger child with concepts he or she is too young to understand. Keep things simple.

Build a sense of responsibility by giving your child some important jobs or treating him as if he is more capable than you think. Sometimes we give responsibility to the child who already is responsible rather than the child who needs his or her confidence boosted.

Encourage your child rather than criticise. Each child has different talents and abilities so it is pointless comparing him or her to others. Let your child know that if they do the best they can, that is all that matters. Play down any deficiencies and emphasise the good things about each child. It is much easier to remember negative things than positive ones, and if children repeatedly hear that they are inadequate, they will come to believe it.

Most importantly, tell your kids you love them every day. Children must feel that they are loveable if they are to feel worthwhile.

Boosting self-confidence is not a one act play. It is a continuous process where the results may take years to show. But hang in there because your child is worth it!



## Quick Parenting Quiz

- Which consequences appear reasonable, respectful and related to a child's behaviour?**
  - You are grounded for the next six months for being late.
  - I'm sorry but you can't go out tomorrow because you are home later than agreed.
  - You must return the item to the store and apologise to the owner.
  - You must return the item to the store and then do extra chores for me for a month.
- Parents rather than carers or teachers have the most influence on the development of a child's self esteem.**

True or false.

Answers: 1. b) and c) 2 true)

## Vitamins for parents

Three ways to encourage children without evaluating them.

- Tell them what you see.** "I see you have put all your toys on the shelf and smoothed out your bed."
- Tell them how you feel.** "I love coming into your room when it is clean."
- Sum up your child's behaviour.** "You have cleaned up your room really well. That's what I call capable."

## Bright idea



### Treat children as you want them to be

If you want children to be responsible you need to treat them as if they are responsible. If you want to have an independent child then you need to treat him as if he was independent. This takes great faith on the part of parents (teachers and care-givers) because kids will sometimes not measure up immediately. It also takes courage to treat children as you want them to be!

## Wise & Witty Words

"Don't hold your parents up for contempt. After all, you are their son or daughter, and it is just possible that you may take after them."

*Unknown*

"Don't drive your kids – inspire them."

*Ian Grant*