



NEWSLETTER

Self-Esteem

March 2009

Parenting Tools

Parents can instill and encourage good self-esteem in their children by meeting their needs, and by setting realistic expectations for their behavior. The following are age based guidelines:

- **BABY** - Parents build the foundation for self-esteem in infancy by treasuring your baby and routinely meeting his needs. In this way he begins to build trust and learns that he is worthy of having his needs met.
- **TODDLER** – The most significant ways to build a toddler's self-esteem are to support her needs to explore, keep her safe, and talk with her about her experiences. These things add to her self-worth and encourage her sense of competency.
- **PRESCHOOL** – Set reasonable age-appropriate expectations. Refrain from labeling him negatively: "lazy", "stupid", or "dumb." Instead label the behavior; for example, "You seem to be tired today."
- **SCHOOL-AGE** – Again, set reasonable expectations. Be aware that the school experience may undermine self-esteem, especially if your child has a learning disability ...support your child, if this is the case. Peers can also tear away at self-esteem. Put downs are rampant in our culture, help her identify them, analyze them and speak up against them.

Adapted from *Instilling and Preserving Self-Esteem in Your Children* by Shari Steelsmith

What is self-esteem?

Self esteem is the value we place on ourselves. It is the feeling we have about our self, and how we fit into our world. It is the knowledge that we are lovable, we are capable, and we are unique. Self-esteem is connected to two separate areas within a child.

One is an inner core of trust that a baby develops by having her needs met routinely...a strong feeling of self-worth originates here.

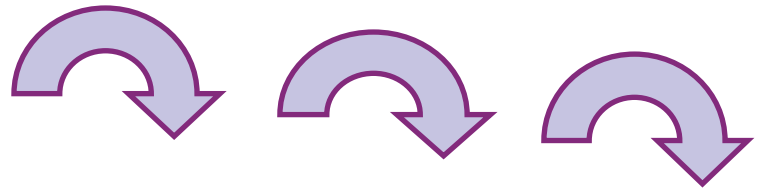
The second area is the child's competency ...when he is old enough; he becomes aware of himself as a person and judges his own abilities.

Self esteem is deeply entwined with a child's sense of self-worth and self-competency: both critical to self-esteem.

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Communities for Kids is a coalition of three early childhood development initiatives. We promote optimal health and development of all children, from conception to age 6, in the South Okanagan-Similkameen. Our coalition includes *Communities for Kids*, *Success By 6@* and *Understanding the Early Years*.

A Child Needs



The most significant influence on a child's self-esteem is the quality of the relationship she has with significant others. Parents are the child's most significant others.

Dorothy Corkville-Briggs

1. Love and acceptance
2. A sense of belonging
3. Safety and security
4. Trust
5. Respect
6. To feel special
7. Confidence

IF I HAD MY CHILD TO RAISE ALL OVER AGAIN

If I had my child to raise all over again.
I'd do more finger-painting and point the finger less.
I'd do less correcting and more connecting.
I'd take my eyes off my watch and watch with my eyes.
I would care to know less and know to care more.
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.
I'd stop playing serious and seriously play.
I'd run through more fields and gaze at more stars.
I'd do more hugging and less tugging.
I would be firm less often and affirm much more.
I'd build self-esteem first and the house later.
I'd teach less about the love of power,
And more about the power of love.

Diane Lomas

Web sites with further information on self-esteem:

www.cmha.ca
www.childdevelopmentinfo.com
www.parentingpress.com

For more great information, check out our web site at

www.communitiesforkids.ca

Send comments, suggestions, ideas and questions to communitiesforkids@telus.net or call 250-496-5511.
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