

# Building Self-Esteem

Helping a child build self-esteem is a crucial and often difficult task for parents. One easy tip for parents to remember is that they are the models for their child's self-esteem. The effects of a parent lacking self-esteem trickle down to his or her children.

Family serves as the foundation for self-esteem. Having a healthy, functioning family does more to build a child's self-esteem than anything. It does not matter if the family is of the single-parent variety or the traditional nuclear family. "It just needs to be a healthy place for children to thrive in.

**Positive Talk** – Don't put yourself down. Don't say negative things about your spouse, especially in a separation or divorce situation. That goes right to the heart of a child, "The message to the child is if dad is bad or not dependable then I must be too because I'm half mom and half dad..

**Don't be a Parachute Parent** – You can't always "parachute" in to solve your child's problems. Empower your child to take care of his or her own business when appropriate. Be available but also teach them how to handle challenges on their own.

**Disappointment is OK** – There is a whole generation of parents who don't ever want their children to feel bad. You see this in things like sports leagues where every kid gets a trophy. This treatment and over-protection makes for unrealistic expectations from life. "Our sole job is to prepare (children) for adulthood. And as adults, you don't always get a prize.

**Sincere Praise** – Tell them when they do well and when they do poorly tell them so in a loving way. False praise leads to more unrealistic expectations.

**Monitor Media** – Negative messages on television, in movies, across the Internet and beyond erode a child's self-esteem. Monitor what they are viewing and talk with them about it.

**Say No** – The word "no" is a love word.. Children must learn they cannot have everything they want. This teaches them to be more discerning.

**Express Love** – Tell children daily that you love them. Parents would be surprised how often this does not happen...and how powerful it is when it does.