

Building Healthy Self-Esteem in Children

Highlights

Self-esteem is a child's overall sense of worth or personal value.

A child's self-esteem is shaped by how they see themselves and how others treat them.

Encouragement helps children develop self-esteem.

Constant criticism can damage self-esteem.

Learning to cope with disappointment is important for building self-esteem.

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What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem refers to a child's overall sense of worth or personal value. A child learns to feel good about themselves based on their experiences and how others treat them. Healthy self-esteem helps children try new things, make friends, and face challenges in their lives. To develop self-esteem, children need to feel:

A sense of belonging

Safety and security

Love and acceptance

Competence and usefulness

Independence, uniqueness, and specialness

Happiness

Positive reinforcement and a warm, supportive environment are key to helping children develop self-esteem.

Building children's self-esteem

Children start learning about themselves and the world from birth. Early experiences within the family shape how children see themselves. They begin to understand whether they are loved, valued, and accepted.

As they grow, children try new skills, gaining confidence through success and learning from failures. Repeated success boosts self-esteem, while repeated failure can harm it. It's important for children to face challenges on their own to build confidence and a sense of accomplishment.

Praise and encourage your child

Encouraging your child is vital for developing self-esteem. Praise not only for achievements but also for small steps along the way. Encourage them to try again if they don't succeed at first. Teachers, family, and friends should also recognize the effort and praise successes.

Constant criticism can significantly damage self-esteem.

Ways to increase your child's self-esteem

Here are practical ways to boost your child's self-esteem:

Spend quality time with them and show interest in their activities.

Set realistic goals and encourage them to try, praising their efforts.

Accept mistakes and celebrate improvements.

Support their interests and friendships.

Make sure they feel heard and trusted to make appropriate decisions.

Offer physical affection and encourage emotional expression.

Help them break down tasks into manageable steps and encourage them to seek help if needed.

Coping with disappointment

Teaching children to cope with disappointment is vital for building self-esteem. Learning to manage emotions when things don't go their way can enhance their ability to cope and feel positive about themselves.

Confidence at school

At school, emphasize your child's unique talents, not just their grades. Focus on their strengths and ensure they receive the support they need. Be involved in school activities and address any concerns such as bullying promptly.

Tools and Assistance

For further support:

You can also consult with a maternal child health nurse for more guidance.