

Building Self-Esteem and Ensuring my Child's Wellbeing

Often without thinking about it, parents fortify their youngsters' self-esteem every day, whether it's by complimenting them on a job well done, kissing them good-bye (assuming they will still let you) or disciplining them for breaking a rule. But all of us have days when we inadvertently bruise children's egos or simply miss an opening to make them feel good about themselves. Here are some easy ways to help instill self-esteem.

Set Boundaries and Expect Them to Follow Rules
Just like younger children, teenagers need boundaries. Clear rules communicate the value that you have for your child, and when your children know they are valued, this is the first building block of self-esteem.

Be Generous With Praise
Commend your child not only for accomplishments but for effort—including those times when it fails to bring the desired results. In addition, encourage your children to feel proud of themselves. Pride should shine from within, not just in response to external approval.

Criticize when Necessary – but Constructively
Criticise when necessary, but never in a hurtful or demeaning manner. Instead of saying: "How could you have gotten that answer wrong?" Say: "You almost got the answer. I'm sure you'll do better next time."

Solicit your Teenager's Opinions
Teenagers have no shortage of them. Include them in everyday family decisions and implement some of his suggestions. What does he think about the new couch you're considering for the living room? Adolescents love nothing better than to be treated like grownups, and they're usually flattered anytime that you invite them into the adult world.

Stay Connected with all forms of Communication
Teenagers like to be self-sufficient and want us to believe that they have everything under control—but that doesn't mean that as parents we needn't keep the lines of communication open and flowing.

Be Supportive during a Conflict
A conflict may seem silly and trivial to us, but to a hormonal teenager, it could be a major source of contention in their lives. Get in the habit of supporting your child through the good and the bad and you will be laying a strong foundation for open communication when bigger challenges come around.

Encourage Teenagers to Cultivate their Talents and Interests
Everybody excels at something. Let your child follow his or her passion, whatever it may be. Even interests that you may consider frivolous can provide opportunities for success and a safe outlet for peer acceptance.