

beyond the classroom



Building your child's confidence

(Excerpts from <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/self-esteem.html> unless otherwise noted.)

As a parent, it's easy to notice when your child feels good about themselves and when they don't. Kids with high self-esteem feel liked and accepted, confident, proud of what they can do, and believe in themselves. Kids with low self-esteem are often self-critical and may feel they're not as good as other kids. They lack confidence and doubt they can do things well.



Self-esteem expert Jack Canfield notes that **80 percent of children entering the first grade scored high on the self-esteem inventory. By the fifth grade only 20 percent of the children were scoring high. And by the time they graduated from high school, that number was down to just 5 percent.** (<http://adventurestoawesome.com/hot-topics/kids-self-esteem-statistics/>)

You have the power to help your child build positive self-esteem by recognizing the effort they put into the things that are particularly difficult for them, and praising the talents that they do have. Here's some ideas:

- **Praise effort.** Avoid focusing praise only on results (such as getting an A) and instead, offer most of your praise for effort, progress, and attitude. For example: "I saw how hard you studied for that test. Way to go!" or "I know that wasn't your best game, but we all have off days. I'm proud of you for not giving up." With this kind of praise, kids put effort into things, work toward goals, and try.
- **Focus on strengths.** Pay attention to what your child does well and enjoys. Make sure your child has chances to develop these strengths. Focus more on strengths than weaknesses if you want to help kids feel good about themselves.
- **Ban harsh criticism.** The messages kids hear about themselves from others easily translate into how they feel about themselves. Harsh words are harmful, not motivating. Correct kids with patience. Focus on what you want them to do next time and show them how.
- **Let kids help and give.** Self-esteem grows when kids get to see that what they do matters to others. Kids can help out at home, do a service project at school, or do a favor for a sibling. Helping and kind acts build self-esteem and other good feelings.
- **Read books together promoting positive self-esteem.** When in doubt, read! Children love stories and these books can help prompt beneficial conversation.
 - *I Am Enough* by Grace Byers, Ages 3-7
 - *Exclamation Mark* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal, Ages 5-8
 - *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio, Ages 9-11
 - *The Magic is Inside You* by Cathy Domoney, Ages 8-12

Self-Esteem Book Lists:

<https://veryspecialtales.com/self-esteem-books-kids-teenagers-parents/>

<https://www.the-best-childrens-books.org/books-on-self-esteem.html>

<https://childrenslibrarylady.com/books-self-esteem/>