

ideas for parents

Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

FAST FACTS

ASSET #38: Self-Esteem

Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when they have high self-esteem.

52%

*of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.**

What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed. "Self-esteem" is one of four positive-identity assets.

* Based on Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999-2000 school year.

High Self-Esteem: Where Does It Come From?

There's no denying that it can be tough to be a kid.

Grown-ups make the rules, things are built above hand- or eye-level, knees get skinned, and worse.

Feeling sad occasionally is totally normal and healthy.

However, there are types of sadness kids feel that aren't healthy.

Diagnoses of depression in children and teens are on the rise, with suicide being one of the top causes of death for youth ages 13-25.

For youth to have a positive sense of identity and self-esteem they need to feel valued and respected. Creating a community that not only respects but also values youth input can go a long way.

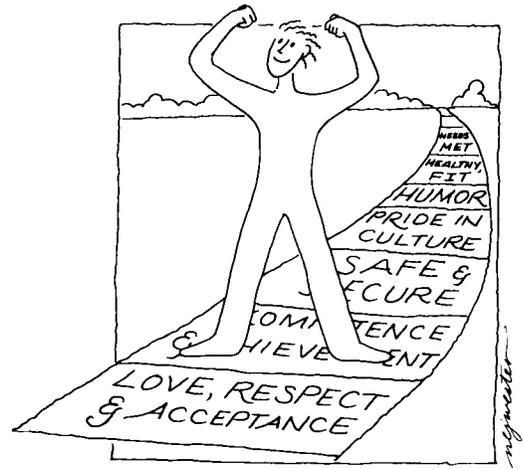
It is important for families to focus and talk about the positive values that influence and shape who they are.

A supporting family values diversity and uniqueness.

Parents must understand that giving youth the opportunity to make decisions works to promote personal growth.

With guidance this leads to a higher sense of achievement and sense of being valued. Youth will go through highs and lows of personal self-esteem and it is the role of parents, mentors, teachers and the community at large to work together in bettering a sense of love, respect and acceptance.

The youth are the future and we must work together to guide them as much as we can towards a path of understanding, success and value in our community.



Dr. Hart suggests families talk about their strengths and focus on positive things about each other. "We make healthy children by working from the inside out," she says, "by cherishing and accepting them as they are and nurturing their growth and development."

talk together

Questions to discuss with your child:

- Name three things you like about yourself and explain why.
- Think back to when you were younger. When did you feel really good about yourself? What was happening? When did you feel bad about yourself? Why?
- When you feel the best about yourself, what activities are you doing?

time together

Three ways to help your child feel better about her- or himself:

1. Compliment your child and let your child hear you saying good things about her or him to someone else.
2. On your child's birthday, give a gift that represents what you admire in her or him and state that admiration specifically.
3. Have your child create an "all about me" book. He or she can write about the family, activities of interest, favorite school subjects, proudest moments, etc. Include photographs, drawings, or special mementos.

Quick Tip:
Give your child lots of attention and compliment her or him.

More Help for Parents

Your Child's Self-Esteem by Dorothy Corkille Briggs. This book offers a formula for parents to help create strong feelings of self-worth in their children. (Published by Doubleday.)

Q & A about Self-Esteem

Q: Can a parent really affect a child's self-esteem?

A: Yes, says Jean Illsley Clarke, author of *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair*. "Life's positive and life's negative offerings are the areas in which adults have great power and opportunity to impact self-esteem," she writes in her book. She suggests parents can provide positive opportunities for their children to succeed; give positive messages to their children; love their children even when they make poor choices; and give specific alternative suggestions when they want their children to act in different ways.

FiNaL WoRD

"Giving children the feeling of being cared about for themselves, not just for their performance, is integral to their self-esteem."

—Richard Oberfield, M.D.

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