

15 Ways to Help Children Like Themselves

Teaching children to like themselves is an important part of the prevention process. Children need to hear these messages over and over again because children who are confident and who feel good about themselves are less vulnerable to abuse.

1. **Reward children.** When children do a good job tell them, and show them by letting them do something special or giving them more responsibility. Focus on the good things they do, not the bad.
2. **Take their ideas, emotions and feeling seriously.** Don't say things like "you'll grow out of it," or "it's not as bad as you think." It is important that they know that you feel their thoughts and feelings are important.
3. **Clearly set limits and rules, and stick to them.**
4. **Be a good role model.** Let children know that you feel good about yourself. Also let them see that you, too, can make mistakes and learn from them.
5. **Teach children how to deal with time and money.** Help them spend time wisely and budget their money carefully.
6. **Help children set reachable goals** so they can achieve success.
7. **Teach children that differences are okay.** Help children develop acceptance for those with different values, backgrounds, and physical and mental abilities. Point out other people's strengths.
8. **Give children responsibility.** They will feel useful and valued.
9. **Be there.** Give support when children need it.
10. **Show them that what they do is important to you.** Talk with them about their activities and interests. If possible, go to their games, parents' day at school, plays, and award ceremonies.
11. **Explain your values.** It is important that children hear more than "do this" or "I want you to do that." Explain what experiences helped you decide your values and the reasons you feel the way you do.
12. **Spend time together.** Share favorite activities- play a game, go for a walk, read a book.
13. **Discuss problems without placing blame.** If children know there is a problem but don't feel attacked, they are more likely to help look for a solution.
14. **Say things to help build their self-esteem,** such as "Thank you for helping" or "That was a great idea!" Avoid phrases that hurt self-esteem like "Why are you so stupid?" or "How many times have I told you?"
15. **Show how much you care about them.** Hug them. Tell them that they are terrific and that you love them.