

Quick guide – boosting self-esteem

What does self-esteem mean?

Self-esteem refers to whether a person appreciates and values themselves. Self-esteem develops and changes as a result of life experiences and interactions with other people.



What are common symptoms of low self-esteem?

- Lacking confidence and showing avoidance.
- Finding it difficult to initiate and maintain friendships.
- Finding change hard.
- Struggling with frustration tolerance
- Experiencing 'negative thoughts'.
- Reluctance to accept praise and recognition.
- Comparing to others.
- Finding it hard to cope when things go wrong.
- Struggling to regulate emotions.
- Having a fear of making mistakes.

Why is it so important to help boost a child's self-esteem?

Self-esteem impacts decision-making process, relationships and the feeling of self-worth and self-efficacy. It also influences motivation, as people with a healthy, positive view of themselves value their potential and may feel inspired to take on new challenges.

How can we help boost a child's self-esteem?

Emotional awareness

Having good self-esteem doesn't mean not finding things difficult or not getting upset – we want our children to be able to express their emotions and 'big' feelings. By providing ample time for connection and discussion, we can discuss and model how we manage difficult and uncomfortable feelings. Use of visual aids can also support children to identify and express their emotional state.

The ZONES of Regulation

Four small icons representing emotions: a sad boy, a bored girl, a tired girl, and a sick girl.	Four small icons representing emotions: a happy girl, a focused boy, a calm girl, and a proud girl.	Four small icons representing emotions: a worried girl, a frustrated boy, a silly girl, and an excited boy.	Four small icons representing emotions: an overjoyed girl, a panicked boy, an angry girl, and a terrified boy.
Blue Zone Sad Bored Tired Sick	Green Zone Happy Focused Calm Proud	Yellow Zone Worried Frustrated Silly Excited	Red Zone overjoyed/Elated Panicked Angry Terrified

Praise

Praise can really boost a child's self-esteem however it is important to be mindful of children's individual 'love language' Some children respond really well to verbal praise, whereas others may feel embarrassed. Little notes on the pillow before bed or praising them in 'earshot' are lovely ways to praise without the 'big celebration.' It is also important to, not only praise for achievement but also for their character strengths e.g. kindness, perseverance, compassion, patience, effort...

Acknowledge and value positive qualities

This may take modelling and coaching....

- What do I like about who I am?
- What characteristics do I have that are positive?
- What are some of my achievements?
- What are some challenges I have overcome?
- What are some skills or talents that I have?
- What do others say they like about me?
- What are some attributes I like in others that I also have in common with?
- If someone shared my identical characteristics, what would I admire in them?
- How might someone who cared about me describe me?
- What 'negative' qualities do I *not* have?

Sometimes working through some of the questions as a family may encourage your child to participate. Also, getting them to ask *you* directly some of the questions may be insightful and help them recognise their own strengths.

Goal setting

Goal setting can be a very powerful motivator and can increase their self-efficacy. By breaking down a goal into small, manageable chunks, we can then praise the progress made. We can also remind them of times where they have overcome challenges and been resilient – this will usually be linked to something they are passionate about. "I know you can reach your goals; do you remember when you learnt to ride a skateboard? That was really tricky but you showed perseverance. How did it feel when you reached your goal?"

Help them find their passion

Exploring their own interests can help children develop a sense of identity, which is essential to building confidence. Of course, seeing their talents grow will also give a huge boost to their self-esteem. This can be done through 'exposure without pressure' and perhaps sharing your passions and interests, as well as those of friends/family.

Praise and encouragement for their wonderful interests and talents will inspire the next generation of problem solvers, artists and creatively unique individuals!


Learn to assert

Asserting yourself, or 'being assertive', means giving your opinion, or saying what you want or need, or how you feel in a polite, calm and respectful way. It's about standing up for yourself while also being considerate of other people's views and feelings.


1. Say What You See

"I noticed that..."  "I heard you say..."

2. Say What You Feel

"I feel..."  "I don't like it when..."

3. Say What You Need

"I need..."  "I would like you to..."

4. Stay Or Go

"From now on please..."  "I'm going to go and..."

Challenge negative thoughts

We can do this through acknowledging the thought and the gathering the evidence for and against the statement. We can recognise and challenge the negative thought by asking questions:

'How might someone else see this?'

'Is there anything that suggests this might not happen/is not true?'

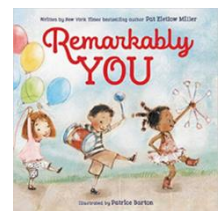
'Where did this thought come from?'

'What would I say to a friend who was thinking this?'

Books:

'Remarkably You' by Pat Zietlow Miller

Remarkably You is an inspirational manifesto about all of the things—little or small, loud or quiet—that make us who we are.



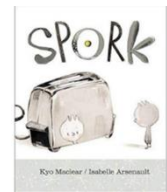
'You Are Awesome: Find Your Confidence and Dare to be Brilliant at (Almost) Anything' by Matthew Syed

This positive and empowering guide, by bestselling mindset author Matthew Syed, will help children build resilience, fulfil their potential and become successful, happy, awesome adults.



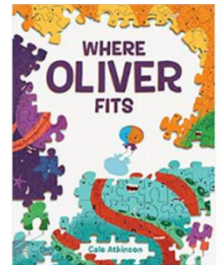
'Spork' by Kyo Maclear

A humorous tale about how Spork -- half spoon, half fork -- finally finds his place at the table.



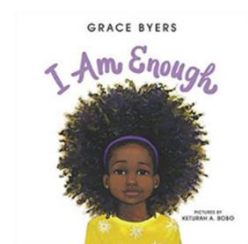
'Where Oliver Fits' by Cale Atkinson

Oliver is a little piece of a big puzzle. Like all of us, Oliver just wants to find where he fits, but finding his place in the great puzzle of life isn't easy... Oliver has always dreamed about where he will fit. Will he be in the mane of a unicorn? The tentacle of a pirate squid? The helmet of an astronaut? When he finally goes in search of his perfect place, he finds that trying to fit in is a lot harder than he thought. But like any puzzle, a little trial and error leads to a solution, and Oliver figures out exactly where he belongs.



'I Am Enough' by Grace Byers

This wonderful tale highlights the importance of loving who you are, respecting others, and being kind to one another.



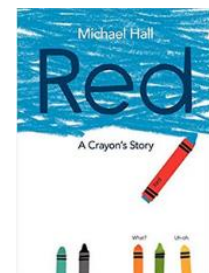
'The OK Book' by Amy Krouse Rosenthal

In this clever and visual play on words, OK is turned sideways, upside down, and right side up to show that being OK can really be quite great.



'Red: A Crayon's Story' by Michael Hall

Funny, insightful, and colourful, Red: A Crayon's Story is about being true to your inner-self and following your own path despite obstacles that may come your way.



'The Dot' by Peter H Reynolds

Art class is over, but Vashti is sitting glued to her chair in front of a blank piece of paper. The words of her teacher are a gentle invitation to express herself. But Vashti can't draw - she's no artist. To prove her point, Vashti jabs at a blank sheet of paper to make an unremarkable and angry mark. "There!" she says. That one little dot marks the beginning of Vashti's journey of surprise and self-discovery

