

Helping Children Develop Confidence

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A basic definition of confidence is an internal belief in yourself and your abilities. Your child may have more confidence in one area of their life over another. Feelings of low self esteem negatively impact confidence and can cause your child to disengage with opportunities because they don't feel they have the capacity to succeed. Low confidence can be debilitating, therefore, it's important to start a conversation about confidence with your child to help them develop greater confidence in themselves.

How can I help my child develop more confidence?

Promote positive thinking and self talk.

How does your child talk about themselves? Are they constantly using derogatory language towards themselves and what they are doing? If so, it might be helpful to have a talk about reframing your thinking. Talk with your child about recognizing their strengths and focusing on improving their weaknesses. If they are struggling to come up with their strengths, perhaps you could talk together about the strengths you see in them. Help them to reframe thoughts they have such as, "I'll never learn how to be a good softball player", to, "I'm still learning how to play softball, but I've made a lot of progress so far." Of course, this step works best if you as the parent are modeling positive self talk and self thinking. Try your best to speak positively about yourself and your achievements when around your children, and they will learn to do the same.

Encourage them to try something that they're interested in.

Is there a school club that your child might be interested in? Is there something on their bucket list that they're too nervous to try? You know your child best and see their

potential. Think of ways you can support them in trying something new. Perhaps you can offer to take them to the tryouts they may be second guessing. Try to provide opportunities for them to push themselves in safe ways, such as going on a difficult hike or asking them to help you make dinner. When they complete a task you know was challenging to them, provide positive feedback. If they don't perform well, discuss with your child how mistakes and 'failures' are opportunities for growth. As you push your child outside their comfort zone in safe ways, their confidence will grow.

Start a conversation about time spent on social media.

It has been shown that those who spend a lot of time on social media have a lower self esteem. This is in part because we start comparing ourselves to what we see on social media and focus on what we don't have. Set a goal together with your child as to how long you each will spend on social media each day, week, or month. Replace that time with something else that brings you joy, such as serving in the community.

When your child lacks confidence, it's easy for them to hold back due to fear and anxiety. Low confidence doesn't have to be permanent, and there are many steps you can take to help increase your child's confidence. Start a conversation with your child about how they are feeling and try to understand where their lack of confidence stems from. Model positive self talk and encourage them to take on new opportunities. Talk with your child about how they spend their time and look for ways to limit time on social media.

References

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