



# Positive Parenting

Positive Parenting aims at developing a child's Self Esteem, Self Confidence and Self Reliance. Children interpret their world through their parents and carers; therefore how they feel they are treated are potent ingredients in developing their identity.

Parents play a significant role in developing a child's **self esteem**; the belief in their intrinsic value as a unique individual, including a positive self image. When a child believes they are valuable, they have the **self confidence** to meet and manage new experiences and take risks, having resources and resilience to cope with personal setbacks. **Self reliance** is equally important in that a child does not need the approval of others before independently problem solving, using inner resources to think, manage and carry out creative ideas.

Some of the benefits of having a positive self esteem, if you are:

- **Resilient**, you won't go to pieces when faced with difficult and unexpected challenges
- **Creative**, you are able to think of different ways to manage situations
- **Able to take risks**, you can learn, discover and develop as an individual
- **Flexible and Adaptable**, better prepared for life in a fast changing world
- **Able to give and commit**, you can have enriched experiences and relationships
- **Common Sense**, have a sense of direction and a feeling of security.



These skills are essential in building the foundations for future success, despite the difficulties our children might experience. Raising children with self esteem impacts their interpersonal relationships, motivation to try and success in school and work. Being able to take risks and to accept both the possibility of and responsibility for making mistakes, is an absolute pre-requisite for learning and healthy development.



What really matters is the relationship you build with your child; therefore not so much what you do, but how you do it. Some key concepts to keep in mind:

- Keep the parent-child relationship alive and on an even keel
  - Value, listen to and spend time with them
  - Praise their efforts and positive choices and ideas, be specific and genuine
  - Respect and trust them with appropriate responsibilities
  - Allow them to make choices within reasonable possibilities.
- Maintain a consistent and predictable environment for your child
  - Explain events, changes and decisions in order to respect your child's right to know
  - Empathise with their need to make sense of their immediate world, and respect their ability to understand
  - Live by example, children learn values from the adults who care for them
- Keep power play and damaging disputes to a minimal
  - Don't take it personally when your child acts out, try to understand the behaviour when there's a break down
  - Recognise the difference between regaining control and power, or using authority to guide, take the lead and accept responsibility
  - Provide structure, firm and clear boundaries through clear but calm communication
  - Give manageable choices and assume trust within the reasonable power you give them
- Demonstrate your commitment to them; show them that you understand them and are on their side.
  - Empathise; understand the way they feel about something and know that it is real for them. Understand their dilemma at their level by talking to and hearing from them
  - Sympathise; share what they are feeling, exercise compassion through allowing legitimate feelings when they are feeling sad, disappointed or hurt
  - Apologise; take responsibility for errors and accept that mistakes are made, therefore modelling strength, forgiveness and relationship building.
  - Compromise; be prepared to give and take when looking at shared and common interests

Increase **'Puff-ups'** (affirmative comments that make children feel good about themselves and build self-esteem) and reduce **'Put-downs'** (unnecessary negative statements that damage or cause distance). We need at least 3 'Puff-ups' to cancel one 'Put down'.

