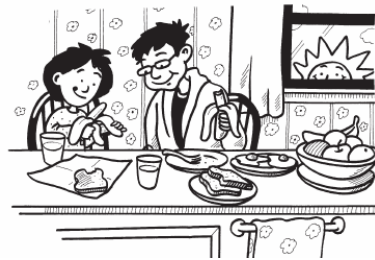


Positive Parenting (4)

February, 2008

Raising Confident Child

It takes confidence to be a kid. Whether going to a new school or meeting people for the first time, kids face a lot of uncharted territory. Naturally, parents want to encourage a can-do attitude in their kids so that they'll bravely take on new challenges and, over time, believe in themselves. While each child is a little different, parents can follow some lines to build kids' confidence.



Curiosity and Confidence

Encouraging your child's curiosity is another way to foster confidence. Maybe your toddler makes noise - not music - when s/he bangs on the piano. But that's ok. S/he's boldly exploring the world to see what s/he can do.

Self-confidence rises out of a sense of competence. In other words, kids develop confidence not because parents tell them they're great, but because of their achievements, big and small. Sure, it's good to hear encouraging words from mom and dad. But words of praise mean more when they refer to a child's specific efforts or new abilities.

When kids achieve something, whether it's brushing their own teeth or riding a bike, they get a sense of themselves as able and capable.

Building self-confidence can begin very early. When babies learn to turn the pages of a book or toddlers learn to walk, they are getting the idea "I can do it!" With each new skill and milestone, kids can develop increasing confidence. Parents can help by giving kids lots of opportunities to practice and master their skills, letting kids make mistakes and being there to boost their spirits so they keep trying. Respond with interest and excitement when kids show off a new skill, and reward them with praise when they achieve a goal or make a good effort.

What about kids with Attention Problems?

Even children who have attention deficit problems can learn how to be more organized and focused. Set reasonable expectations and teach them in small gentle doses.

With plentiful opportunities, good instruction, and lots of patience from parents, kids can master basic skills - like tying their shoes and making the bed. Then, when other important challenges present themselves, kids can approach them knowing that they have already been successful in other areas. Of course, supervision is important to ensure that kids stay safe. But to help them really learn a new skill, it's also important not to hover. Give kids the opportunity to try something new, make mistakes, and learn from them.



Drink Healthy!

The next time your teen wants a soda, tell him/her this: a typical can has 10 teaspoons of sugar — more than in a chocolate bar! Try to steer him/her to these healthy choices instead.



Water is the best all-day drink. It has no sugar or calories. Take water bottles in the car and to sports games and practices.

Try serving water with meals at home and asking for it when you eat out. You can add flavor with a lemon slice. *Note:* club soda, and sparkling water are good alternatives. Like water, they have no sugar or calories, and they have the “fizz” factor kids like.



The Art of Listening

When it comes to communicating with your tween, sometimes what you hear is more important than what you say.

When parents take the time to listen, kids get the message that what they have to say is important.

In turn, this makes them more likely to listen to your thoughts on the subject.

If your child starts a conversation, try to make time for it right then. S/He’s more likely to open up when s/he picks the time and topic.

Also, resist the temptation to jump in or ask your child lots of questions. As soon as you begin to criticize or cross-examine, s/he’s likely to stop talking.

Q & A: Expect Respect

Q: My tween can be such a smart aleck. Some of the things he says are so rude. What should I do?

A: As tween mature, they frequently begin to assert themselves. When expressing their opinions, they may speak disrespectfully. Kids also like to imitate behavior they see - in everyone from friends to TV characters. When your child is rude, let him know immediately that his behavior is unacceptable.



Try to be calm but firm. Example: “You may not talk to me that way”. If necessary, end the conversation until he speaks nicely.

Then, explain what will happen the next time he speaks rudely (lose a privilege). If he does it again, be sure to follow through with the consequence. Finally, keep in mind that learning respect takes time. Middle graders like to shock their parents by acting out, but if you treat your child fairly, chances are s/he will become more respectful as s/he matures.

Our Purpose

Understanding how stressful life is and living in a demanding community, we offer busy parents some effective tips to help your children succeed in school and life. On your behalf, we search for and provide you with the most practical ideas to promote academic success, effective parenting, a solid home-and-school partnership, healthy habits, and positive character traits.