

Self-Esteem



By: Anne Jackson, Susie Ralph and Donna Stoness

**The production of this booklet was funded by
the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
and the National Literacy Secretariat**

© Kingston Literacy 2004

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is how you feel about yourself. When you have good feelings about yourself - what you are and what you can be - you have positive self-esteem. This good self-esteem can be nurtured and developed at all stages of life.

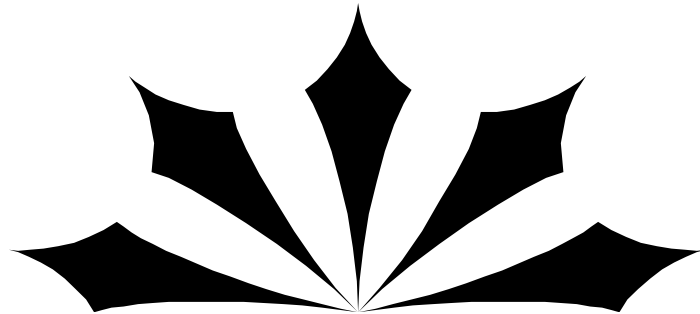


Positive self-esteem is one of the most important influences on how you live, love and learn.



Good self-esteem is:

- thinking positively about yourself
- liking yourself
- accepting yourself
- believing in yourself
- feeling safe and secure
- being open to learning
- being open to doing
- being open to looking at the world as an individual
- knowing you are able to cope with life's challenges



Sometimes maintaining good self-esteem is not easy. You may experience times of poor self-esteem and feeling negatively about yourself, but this is very human. At times, when life seems hard and you have to face difficult situations, you may have to find new ways to nurture good self-esteem in order to feel that you can cope. In other words, good self-esteem helps you overcome the bad times.



Having positive self-esteem as a child is the route to becoming an accepting and loving adult. When you nurture positive self-esteem in your child, you are giving them the keys to happiness, independence and success. Good self-esteem is the bridge between who you are and what you can do.

About the Child

A child needs:

- to be safe
- to be loved
- to love
- to be accepted
- to be held
- to belong



- to trust

- to express themselves

- to feel valuable



- to be an individual

- to feel capable



- to feel free to try

- to understand their world



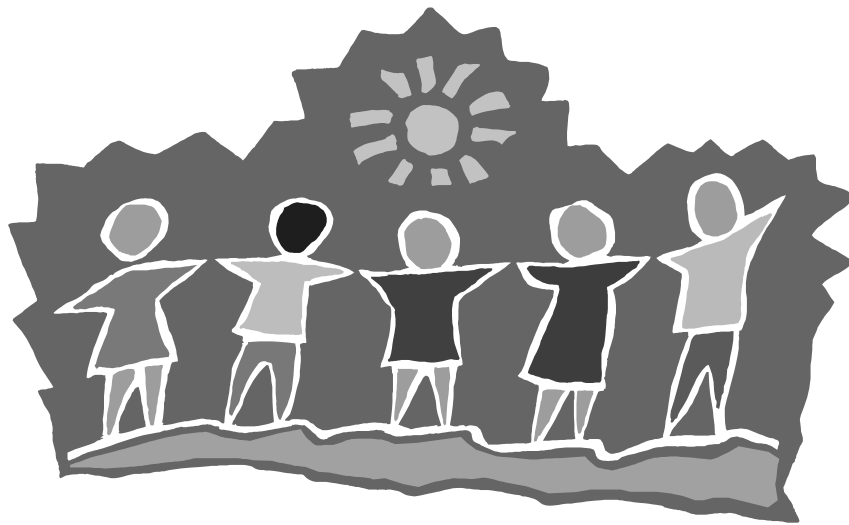
- to be encouraged

- to be stimulated

- to be guided



Good self-esteem in children comes from having their needs met.



About the Parent

Being a parent:

- is an exciting role
- is being a caregiver
- is being responsible for a child
- is expressing love
- is receiving love



- is being a child's first teacher

- is being a role model

- is being a provider

- is being a protector



- is being a guide

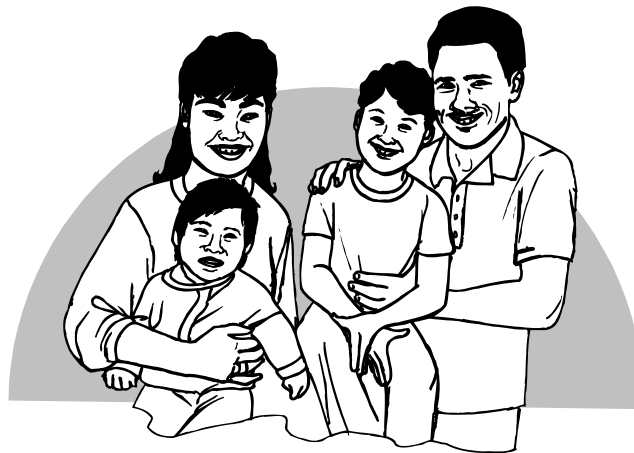
- is wanting the best for your child



- is being aware of the stages of your child's development
- is understanding what needs to be done and when
- is allowing some things to be left undone
- is trying new things
- is understanding that you are not perfect.



In parents, good self-esteem comes from feeling successful as a parent.



How to Nurture Good Self-Esteem in Children

In children, good self-esteem comes from having their needs met.

The following are some suggestions about how to meet your child's needs and at the same time nurture their self-esteem.

1. The need **to be safe**

- Provide your child with a warm home, good food and adequate clothing.
- Be aware of possible dangers and take the necessary precautions.



2. The need **to be loved**

- Tell your children that they ARE loved.
- Show your child affection every day.



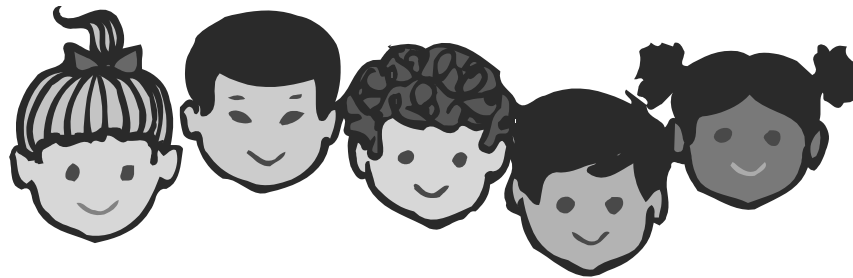
3. The need **to love**

- Give your child opportunities to show their love.
- Accept your child's love in the ways that it is offered.



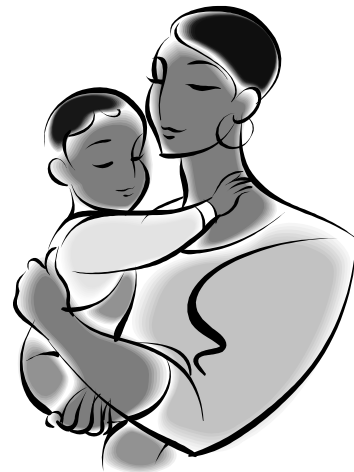
4. The need **to be accepted**

- Say something positive to your child every day.
- Provide your child with positive opportunities to interact with others.



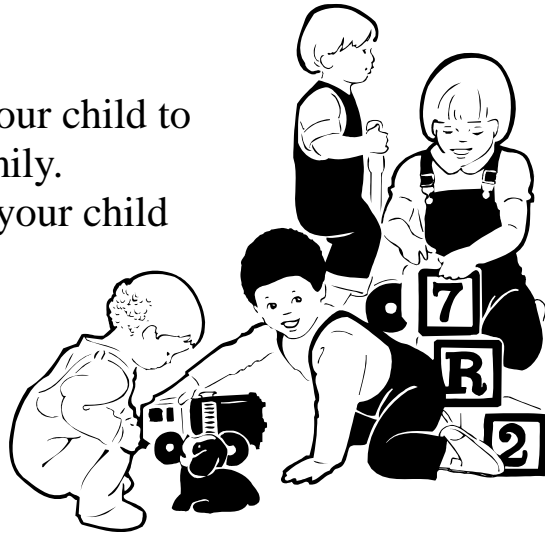
5. The need **to be held**

- Greet your child with a hug in the morning and remember to do the same at bedtime.
- Hold your child when they are upset.



6. The need to belong

- Create opportunities for your child to be part of an extended family.
- Provide opportunities for your child to be part of a play group.



7. The need to trust

- Ensure that a caring adult is with your child at all times.
- Provide a regular routine that your child can count on: for example, reading to and holding your child at bedtime.



8. The need to express themselves

- Listen to your child.
- Answer your child's questions.



9. The need **to feel valuable**

- Give your child age-appropriate chores around the house.
- Praise your child and their accomplishments.



10. The need **to be an individual**

- Help your child to uncover their talents.
- Provide opportunities to meet different people and to do new and different things.



11. The need **to feel capable**

- Give your child responsibilities, like helping with supper.
- Give your child opportunities to make choices, to follow through with those choices and to be responsible for the outcome.



12. The need to feel free to try

- Encourage your child to try new things.
- Offer your child positive reinforcement when they try: for example, when they are learning to talk, praise their successful attempts, and offer support and encouragement for all of their efforts.



13. The need to understand their world

- Make sure your child understands up front what is expected of them in all circumstances: for example, before going shopping, let your child know where you are going, how long you will be, that they can ride in the cart, if they will get a treat, and so on.
- Provide your child with opportunities to see the outside world: for example, go for a walk.



14. The need to be encouraged

- Teach your child to try again if things do not work the first time.
- Be a cheerleader for your child's interests.



15. The need **to be stimulated**

- Read to your child every day.
- Play with your child every day.



16. The need **to be guided**

- Be a role model for your child.
- Be fair, be firm and be frank with your child.



How to Nurture Good Self-Esteem in Yourself

1. Get regular exercise.
2. Make good nutrition choices.
3. Make time for yourself.
4. Treat and reward yourself.
5. Spend time with friends.
6. Try new things.
7. Learn new things.
8. Develop your own interests.
9. Acknowledge your good points, your talents and your achievements.
10. Set goals.
11. Accept only respect.
12. Help others.
13. Talk to other parents.
14. Reach out for help when needed - to a friend, to a family member, to a doctor or other professional.
15. Accept that **NO ONE IS PERFECT.**
16. Be positive.

