

Basic steps to build self-confidence in children

As parents, we all want our children to feel confident in themselves. Here's how to help your child build self-confidence.

As parents, we all want our children to feel confident in themselves. At the same time, all parents worry — about skills they're still learning, milestones they haven't reached, or social or emotional challenges they're facing.



When anxiety hits, take a deep breath and focus on your child's strengths. This will help build their confidence. It's no secret that when we focus on our weaknesses, we often feel insecure. But when we lean into our strengths, we feel more confident — and that gives us the energy to move forward. The same is true for children.

So how can parents help their children focus on their strengths and build that confidence? Here are some simple steps to get started.

Tell them about what you see.

Children thrive when they feel recognized. By recognizing and naming their child's strengths, parents can help build the confidence they need to tackle challenges. Get a jar or notebook and write down qualities you admire in your child — and have your child add what they like about themselves. On tough days, take it out and read the notes together. You can even make naming strengths a daily ritual: In the evening or at breakfast, name 'one good thing' you notice. These can be simple, like the way your child puts on his or her own shoes or how gently he or she plays with his or her siblings.

For example, when you see your child treating others with compassion or facing his or her fears with courage, say encouraging words like, "*I saw you visit your friend after she fell at the park today. That's so kind of you* "

or " *You tried again after falling off the bar. That's so brave .*"



Focus on strengths

When children are faced with something new or challenging, they often focus on what they can't do. For example, a child nervous about his first basketball practice might feel overwhelmed by the whole scene—the hoop, the fast-moving other kids, the size of the court—and think, " *I can't do this .*"

This is where parents can step in and help them believe in their abilities. This can boost their confidence enough to take the first step. For example, ' *You don't know how to shoot a basketball yet, but you know how to dribble, so you can start with that .* '

Honor every step

You can't learn a new skill without making mistakes! Just like no one learns to ride a bike without falling off a few times. Show your child that you can honor or celebrate each step along the way. This might look like:

' *Tying shoelaces is hard! But you've learned the first two steps, so now we just need to practice the last one. .* '

' *Look at you making your own sandwich and pouring your own milk! Spilling milk is no big deal. .* '

' *I saw how frustrated you got when your work fell over. I also noticed you walked away to calm down instead of screaming or throwing. Good job. .* '



Tell your children stories about growing up.

Children are constantly building a story about themselves: who they are, what they like, and what they can do. They also love hearing stories about themselves. Reminisce about their childhood (even if they're still little!) and share memories that highlight their growth. What can they do now that they couldn't do a few months ago? Can they dribble a soccer ball? Reach the top shelf? Walk the dog? Express their feelings?

When parents celebrate the little things their children do as they grow, they are nurturing their self-confidence and reminding them that they are becoming stronger and more capable every day!

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