

## Self Esteem

*Professor Matt Sanders*

CHILDREN WITH HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM ARE LIKELY TO MAKE FRIENDS EASILY AND BE HAPPY, COOPERATIVE AND SUCCESSFUL AT SCHOOL. THEY COPE WITH STRESS EFFECTIVELY AND ARE FUN PEOPLE TO BE AROUND.

However self-esteem doesn't come built-in at birth. We first learn our view of ourselves during childhood. As parents it is therefore very important to help your child develop a true sense of their own strengths and weaknesses.

Encouraging self-esteem in children comes down to a consistent, positive approach to their upbringing.

Children who receive plenty of praise and encouragement feel good about themselves. A child who believes their parents have confidence in them, by allowing them to do certain things by themselves, will learn confidence. Telling your child you love them and spending time with them will help your child feel valued and cared for.

It's important to encourage children to follow a healthy lifestyle. Regular exercise and good grooming habits help children develop a positive image.

*“Encouraging self-esteem in children comes down to a consistent, positive approach to their upbringing.”*

It's equally important for the development of healthy self-esteem that children learn how to deal with disappointment.

A child who is not chosen for a team may put themselves down, saying: “I'm dumb, you hate me.” or “I'm just stupid”. If this happens, try to avoid being too sympathetic; instead encourage your child to try again after the

set-back and enjoy the activity or game even if they aren't chosen every time.

Rather than simply reassuring your child that everything will be alright, let them know you understand their disappointment. Work with your child to find a reasonable way of dealing with that disappointment.

Remember too, concentrate on the effort your child puts in, not the results. Praising your child for trying and making an improvement will motivate them to continue trying at a difficult task.

**Parenting Tip:** Laughter really is a great medicine. Children who feel good about themselves laugh spontaneously, develop a sense of humour and learn to tell funny stories. Encourage your child to laugh by listening to their stories, playing games and having fun together.

**Find more parenting tips at: [manitoba.ca/triplep](http://manitoba.ca/triplep) or call 945-4777 in Winnipeg or toll-free 1-877-945-4777.**

Professor Matt Sanders is founder of the Triple P - Positive Parenting Program.

