

NEWS FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES



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**What is Self-Esteem?
Signs, Causes, &
Strategies to Boost Self-
Esteem**

Upcoming Webinars



What is Self-Esteem and Why Does it Matter?

Self-esteem can be defined as a person's overall subjective sense of self-worth and value. It refers to how much you appreciate and like yourself, and how important you believe you are to the world and those around you. To build self-esteem, children need both appreciation from other people and inner self-respect. A feeling of security and belonging, confidence in one's own self and abilities, and a strong sense of identity, all contribute to positive self-esteem.

Children begin to develop self-esteem as babies, when they feel safe, loved, and accepted by caregivers. As babies become toddlers, they learn new things and begin to feel good about their new skills. Their self-esteem grows when caregivers and others in their life validate and give positive attention to the things that they learn to do all by

themselves. Self-esteem continues to develop in this way over time. Those who consistently receive overly critical or negative feedback and responses from family and friends will likely experience low self-esteem. Racism and discrimination have also been shown to have negative effects on self-esteem.

Research shows that self-esteem impacts children's decision-making, motivation, relationships, emotional health, and overall quality of life. When children have positive self-esteem, they feel good about themselves and feel secure in their abilities. This gives them the confidence to try new things. When things don't go their way, positive self-esteem helps children cope with mistakes, and motivates them to keep trying. Children with positive self-esteem are also more likely to stand up for themselves when treated unfairly. Children with low self-esteem tend to feel unsure about themselves and their abilities. They may avoid trying new things because they expect to fail or think they won't be accepted. Children with low self-esteem may tend to give up easily when they don't find success with something, and struggle to learn from mistakes. They may allow others to treat them poorly, because they don't see themselves as worthy.

Many teachers have likely experienced having a student who struggles putting forth effort to learn or who becomes discouraged by setbacks or materials they perceive to be too difficult. This can leave teachers feeling puzzled about how to best meet their needs. Research has shown that a cause of this behavior in students is the mindset they have about their own intelligence. Having a mindset that one is smart or not smart has serious negative consequences for learning.



A strategy teachers can use to help students “bounce back” when confronted with academic setbacks and other difficulties is to offer praise for students' work and efforts. This alters the mindset so that students begin to view their intelligence as something that can be developed. In doing so, students are better able to persevere when confronted with challenges.

Elementary & Middle School Students

Signs of Low Self-Esteem

- Fear of failing or hesitance in situations that may end in embarrassment
- Lack of interest or motivation, even in things that used to get them excited
- Avoiding new situations or having a fear of trying new things
- Trouble in making friends
- Quickly frustrated when things become difficult

Causes of Low Self-Esteem

- Lack of consistent parental support
- Feeling like no one is there to help them academically
- Bullying by classmates or older students
- A traumatic experience happened to them at some point
- Not feeling like their skills can match up with other students

Consequences of Low Self-Esteem

- More likely to turn to drugs and alcohol
- Lack of motivation throughout life
- Trouble establishing and maintaining relationships
- Anxiety and depression may follow them through the years
- Failure to pursue goals and settling for less than the best

High School Students

Signs of Low Self-Esteem

- Constantly pointing the finger at others for mistakes
- Lack of interest at both home and school
- Continuous negativity
- Feeling like nobody cares
- Persistently feeling anxious or sad

Causes of Low Self-Esteem

- Unfortunately, bullying is quite common in high school and can greatly affect the student for years to come.
- Abuse at home can bring on a lifetime of low self-esteem.
- Changing schools during high school years can be a traumatic event resulting in problems with confidence.
- Mood disorders with unpredictable hormones.
- An unsupportive family can bring on a feeling of worthlessness.

Consequences of Low Self-Esteem

- An early use of alcohol and problems with drugs
- No interest in pursuing their education
- Poor self-image problems
- Negativity
- Trouble sustaining relationships

What Can Teachers Do to Build Student Self-Esteem?



Give specific and genuine positive feedback on effort rather than outcome, when warranted. For example, “You made a lot of progress on that project in just an hour.” Avoid excessive praise and generic praises such as “good job.”



Make note of concrete signs of progress students are making, no matter how small, as opposed to giving repeated, general pep talks like, “you can do it.”



Highlight student accomplishments by displaying work in the classroom or making a positive phone call home to inform caregivers of positive efforts students have made.



Get to know student interests and engage the student’s interests by setting them up for success. Provide them with specific tasks that they are likely to excel at.



Ensure positive feedback is provided to all students. Avoid continually affirming the same students.



Teach students how to set goals that are measurable and attainable. Have them write their goals and keep them somewhere visible and accessible. Check in with them at the end of the week to see their progress or completion.

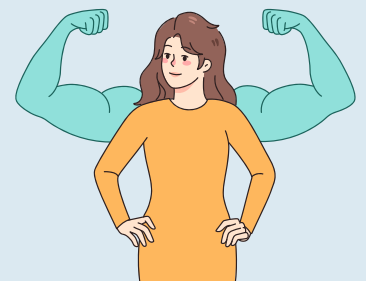


Teach and model the use of positive self-talk. Positive self-talk allows students to feel as if they have an inner monologue that makes them feel good about themselves and the things going on in their lives. This video is a great way to introduce the concept of positive self-talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJ2YQp3judg>.



Build in lessons to teach children about self-esteem and strategies to build their self-esteem. Click the links below to access some suggested activities.

- [Kindergarten- 2nd Grade](#)
- [3rd - 5th Grade](#)
- [Middle School](#)
- [High School](#)



healthy Self-Talk 	
THIS	NOT THAT
✓ Whoops. I made a mistake.	✗ I'm so dumb.
✓ I like me.	✗ No one likes me.
✓ I did something bad.	✗ I'm a bad person.
✓ This is really hard, but I'm going to keep trying.	✗ I give up. I'll never be able to do this.
✓ I haven't figured it out...yet.	✗ I never get anything right.
✓ I am enough. And worthy, too.	✗ I'm not good enough.

Designed by: Ashley Lakind
 Content created by: Ashley Lakind and Kathryn Morris
 Edited by: Gretchen Stumpf

Sources:

<https://www.apa.org/education-career/k12/using-praise>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-self-esteem-2795868>

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Sleep in Autism

Family ECHO

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

4 to 5:15 p.m.

Sleep disturbance in autism is very common. This session will discuss the causes of sleep issues, the impact of sleep issues, and strategies to improve sleep.

 [Click to register](#)

Challenging Behavior and Autism

Family ECHO

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

4 to 5:15 p.m.

This session will identify types of challenging behavior with a discussion on strategies for addressing challenging behavior.

**Family ECHO webinars are designed for parents and caregivers of children with autism though they may be useful to educators who provide support to families.*

 [Click to register](#)

Integrating MTSS and Mental Health Supports for Students

Branching Minds

Thursday, February 22, 2024

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Presenters: Tessa Barbazon, Bonnie Contreras, Essie Sutton

On Demand Webinar

CLICK HERE 

Building Executive Function Skills: It Starts With the Adults
Branching Minds

Presenters: Dr. Jenny Barkac,
Trudy Bender