

# Help kids feel good

## *Building self-esteem*

**Healthy self-esteem is feeling good about yourself, feeling that you are a worthwhile person. Self-esteem builds a solid foundation to help children and parents cope with life.**

### What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem is about valuing and liking yourself. It is also about believing in what you can do. Children develop self-esteem when:

- ❖ they feel they have a place in the world where they belong
- ❖ they are a part of a family where they matter
- ❖ they are encouraged to do things and succeed.

### Why is self-esteem important?

- ❖ Self-esteem helps people feel they can develop their own skills and contribute to their community.
- ❖ When people have low self-esteem they don't feel confident about doing things for themselves, or using their talents and abilities in the best way.
- ❖ Low self-esteem is also linked to stress, coronary heart disease and anti-social behaviours.

### What parents can do

- ❖ Tell your child that you love them as they are.
- ❖ Show your child that you love spending time with them doing the things they like to do.
- ❖ Show respect by talking in a way that you would like to be spoken to.
- ❖ Listen in a way that shows you take your child seriously.
- ❖ Encourage friendships. Make their friends welcome in your home and get to know them.
- ❖ Help your child to explore any hobbies that they are interested in.
- ❖ When you play games with your child make sure they have opportunities to win.

- ❖ Celebrate your child's achievements and successes.
- ❖ Show your child that you have faith in them. Don't solve all their problems. Help them learn problem-solving skills so they can manage things for themselves.

### Reminders

- **Children are not born with self-esteem.**
- **Young children learn self-esteem through what they can do and what their parents think of them.**
- **'Put down' messages damage self-esteem.**
- **Giving time, hugs and smiles are very important to building self-esteem.**
- **Laugh *with* your children - not *at* them.**
- **Keep giving sincere messages that build self-esteem in your teenagers, even if they say they don't believe you. These messages matter.**
- **Self-esteem is learned and can be changed.**
- **Take care of your own self-esteem.**

