



## ***A Child's Self-esteem The Building Blocks for Strong Character***

### ***What is Self-esteem?***

Self-esteem is how you feel about yourself. Parents need to help build their child's self-esteem.

### ***How Do I Know if My Child Has High Self-esteem?***

Kids who have a high self-esteem:

- Believe they can do things well
- Believe they look good
- Think that they are fun
- Are not afraid to take chances
- Like themselves
- Express their feelings without being afraid

Treating your child well from the start is the best way to build self-esteem. Children should be shown that they are important and that they matter when they are first born. This creates trust, and feelings of safety and importance within the child.

Everything that parents say, as well as what they don't say, has an impact on what children think and how they feel about themselves. In order to do the best they can in school, children need to feel good about themselves, which also helps them to make friends.

When children are yelled at or are made to feel ashamed they can start to develop low self-esteem. Don't say things that are hurtful to your child like:

- "What's the matter with you?"
- "You ought to be ashamed of yourself."
- "Why can't you ever do it right?"

All of these 'words' can add up, and have just the same effect on children as hitting. Ignoring children can also make them think less about themselves, and may make them feel very lonely.

### ***Building Self-esteem***

- Reward children for good things. Don't dwell on the bad things.
- Say things like "You're the best", "You're so special" or "I'm so proud of you".
- Have reasonable expectations.

- Never make fun of your children.
- Discuss problems without blaming anybody.
- Set limits and stick to them!
- Be a good role model. Don't let your children hear you say bad things about yourself.
- Give children responsibilities. This make them feel useful.
- Ask your children to help you make choices.
- Support your children and be there when they need you.
- Go to your child's events and activities and show them what they do is important.
- Praise them often.

***It's okay to ask for help!***

Parenting is one of the hardest, and also the most important job that you will ever have. If you have questions or concerns, or just need someone to talk to, then call and ask to speak to a Public Health Nurse.

**Chouteau County Health Department**

**406-622-3771**

**Our hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

