



Raising Confident Kids



Confident children believe in themselves and their ability to face and take on new challenges. That's why it's only natural that parents want to instill confidence in their kids. Having confidence makes kids feel good about themselves and better enables them to try new things, cope with their mistakes and try again.

Since there is no parenting manual, parents are often left wondering how to build confidence in their kids.

Boys Town offers these recommendations to help with confidence development and maintenance:

➔ Have realistic and developmentally appropriate expectations and trust the process.

- Don't ask your child to do something that you, as a parent, cannot do or did not accomplish until later in life. Parents often have grand expectations for their kids and, while those expectations usually come from a positive place, it can cause suffering for both the parent and child to expect more of them than what is developmentally appropriate.
- Take care to recognize your child's areas for growth, as well as their resilience, strength and adaptability. It is important to give children space and time to grow and to reassure them that you are there to support them.

➔ Be mindful of language and start with challenging thoughts.

- Understand that language can cause confusion and we often try to make sense of the world with overly simplified or overly complicated language, so urge your children to ask for clarification if they don't understand what is being said.
- Encourage your children to challenge their brains by asking probing questions when they don't understand something, and help them to learn that thoughts come and go and to not take them too seriously.

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➡ **Pay attention to expressed language.**

- Parents must be mindful of how they speak to themselves and their children and avoid overly critical, inflexible or extreme language.
- Make sure that the language being expressed reflects family values and areas of importance.
- When speaking to your kids, it's important to highlight qualities and values behind the performance. For example, don't dwell on the grade your child received on a project, but rather on the thought and persistence put into it.
- Avoid statements that label your kids like, "Jane is really shy" or "Tommy's not very athletic," as these types of comments can negatively impact self-concept development, even if the comments may be based on observed facts.

➡ **Lead with values and what matters.**

- Remember, language is most effective when it is clear, linked to values and used to highlight strengths and potential.
- As parents, reflect on your values, share them with your kids and let your kids explore and share what they value.
- A great way to start the values conversation is with a question like, "What do you want people to say about you at your 75th birthday party?"

➡ **Stop talking and start doing.**

- You are your child's role model, so let them see you try new things, fail and pivot when necessary. Do things that are important to you and based on your values.
- Teach your children to bravely face the world and help them to manage their fears and understand expectations.



A healthy self-concept is built through life experience and supported by trust, personal values, developmentally appropriate expectations and intentional use of language. Boys Town Behavioral Health offers a variety of resources to help parents to navigate the challenges of building a solid self-concept in kids including these Values Assessments.

Additional Resources

- ➔ therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheets/values-none
- ➔ motivationalinterviewing.org/value-card-sort-online-game

➡ **For more information** or to make an appointment at the Boys Town Center for Behavioral Health, call **531-355-3358**.

Visit **Parenting.org** for more information from the parenting experts at Boys Town.