

Mindful Minute

A Mental Health Resource for Parents

VOLUME 12

Why Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, and Connection Matter for Your Child

How a child sees themselves shapes how they learn, handle challenges, and build relationships. Self-esteem, self-efficacy, and a strong sense of self are the three key foundations that help children thrive academically and emotionally.

Self-esteem is a child's belief that they are valued and worthy. **Self-efficacy** is the confidence that they can try, learn, and succeed—even when things are hard. A **healthy sense of self** allows children to understand their feelings, strengths, and values. Together, these skills help children take healthy risks, recover from mistakes, and advocate for themselves.

Parents play a powerful role in developing these foundations. When adults listen with empathy, encourage effort over perfection, and allow children to solve problems with guidance, children learn to trust themselves. Simple phrases like “I believe in you” and “What do you think you could try next?” can make a lasting impact.

Equally important are healthy relationships. Positive connections with caring adults teach children that they are safe, respected, and supported. These relationships become the base from which confidence grows.

By nurturing connection, celebrating growth, and supporting independence, parents help children develop the inner strength they need for life—now and in the future.

Family Check-In Night

A Family Check-In Night is a simple way to create space for conversation and connection, and it usually takes about 20 minutes.

What Is Family Check-In Night?

Pick one evening each week for everyone to gather without distractions (no phones, no TV). Each family member takes turns answering three simple prompts:

- One good thing that happened this week
- One challenge they faced
- One goal or hope for the coming week

Why It Works

This activity builds healthy relationships by creating a space where everyone feels heard and valued. Children learn that their thoughts and feelings matter, which strengthens trust



and emotional connection. Sharing challenges helps normalize mistakes and setbacks. When parents model problem-solving and reflection, children develop self-efficacy. This is the belief that they can work through difficulties. Celebrating wins, big or small, boosts self-esteem and reinforces a positive self-image.

Tips for Success

- Let each person speak without interruption.
- Validate feelings without rushing to fix problems.
- Encourage effort and growth, not perfection.
- Keep it relaxed. Snacks or dessert can help!

Make It Your Own

Some families add a “gratitude round” or end by choosing one small action everyone will try this week. Over time, Family Check-In Night becomes more than an activity- it becomes a foundation for connection, confidence, and resilience that supports your child at home and beyond.

Caring for Yourself So You Can Care for Your Children

Parenting is rewarding, but it's also demanding. Taking care of yourself isn't selfish, it's essential. When parents build self-esteem and self-efficacy, children benefit from calmer, more confident adults who model healthy habits. Here are **self-care ideas** that fit into busy family life:

Create “Micro-Wins” Each Day

Choose one small, doable goal. Maybe take a walk, drink water, or step outside for fresh air. Checking it off builds a sense of accomplishment and reinforces the belief, “I can follow through.” That's self-efficacy in action.

Reframe Your Inner Voice

Notice how you talk to yourself. Replace “I'm failing at this” with “I'm learning as I go.” Write



one thing you handled well each day, no matter how small. This practice strengthens self-esteem and reduces guilt-driven thinking.

Try a “Joy Reset” Activity

Pick one activity that's just for you—reading a chapter, listening to music, stretching, or creating something with your hands. Even 10 minutes can reset your nervous system and restore energy.

Build a Parent Support Ritual

Connection builds confidence. Send a weekly check-in text to a friend, join a walking group, or share a laugh with another parent at pickup. Feeling supported reminds you that you're not alone.

Model Healthy Boundaries

Say yes to rest and no to overload when possible. Let your children see you prioritize balance. This strengthens your self-worth and shows kids that caring for yourself is a strength, not a weakness.

Small, intentional moments of self-care help parents feel capable, grounded, and confident—creating a healthier, happier family for everyone.

Strengthen Confidence and Connection

The way we talk with our children has a powerful impact on how they see themselves and relate to others. Everyday conversations can nurture healthy relationships while building self-esteem and self-efficacy—the belief that “I can handle challenges.” Here are practical, parent-friendly communication strategies that can support your children.

1. Connect Before You Correct

Children are more receptive when they feel understood. Acknowledge feelings first, even when behavior needs guidance.

- **Try:** “I can see you’re upset. Let’s take a breath and talk about what happened.”

This builds trust and emotional safety.

2. Focus on Effort, Not Just Outcomes

Praise effort, persistence, and strategies rather than results.

- **Instead of:** “You’re so smart.”
- **Try:** “You kept working even when it was hard.”

This helps children see success as something they can influence.

3. Give Choices to Build Confidence

Offering age-appropriate choices encourages independence and decision-making.

- **Try:** “Would you like to do homework before dinner or after?”

Choices help children feel capable and respected.



4. Ask Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions promote reflection and problem-solving.

- **Try:** “What part of your day was tricky?” or “What do you think might help next time?”

This strengthens communication skills and self-awareness.

5. Normalize Mistakes as Learning Opportunities

Mistakes are essential for growth. Talk about them openly and calmly.

- **Try:** “Mistakes help us learn. What did this one teach you?”

This reduces fear of failure and builds resilience.

6. Model Calm, Respectful Communication

Children learn by watching adults. Speak calmly, listen fully, and apologize when needed.

- **Try:** “I was frustrated and didn’t respond well. I’m sorry.”

Modeling accountability builds healthy relationship skills.

7. Encourage Positive Self-Talk

Help children develop an inner voice that is supportive and kind.

- **Try:** “What could you say to yourself when something feels tough?”

Small, consistent communication choices make a big difference. When children feel heard, valued, and capable, they are more likely to believe in themselves and build strong, healthy relationships.



Helpful Resources

Please scan the QR code to explore a variety of mental health articles and videos.