



NHS Fife Department of Psychology

Building Children's Confidence

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BUILDING CHILDREN'S CONFIDENCE

Success and achievement build up confidence. Children need to do things and try activities to gain confidence. You can help your child develop their confidence by praising them when they do well in everyday activities and situations.

Make a personal statement

- Praise them by saying *"I like it when you..."* or *"Thank you, that helps me"*.
- Avoid negative statements like *"You're hopeless"* or *"I knew you wouldn't be able to do it"*.
- When praising your child, be specific so your child is clear about what you are referring to. *"I was so happy when you let Jordan play with your toy"*

Show confidence in your child's ability

- Allow them to make as many of their own decisions as possible about what to drink, what to wear etc.
- Tell them things like *"I know you'll be able to manage"*.
- Ask their opinion. For example, ask them *"do you like that song?"* or *"do you like this story?"*. This shows that you are interested in what they think and value their opinions.

Admire their efforts and focus on their achievements

- Children can easily become discouraged without your support and encouragement for their efforts and what they try to do.
- Look for opportunities to praise their attempts at trying and learning new things: e.g. *"What a clever girl! A month ago you could only put on your socks– and now you can do your shoes too!"*

Focus on the difficulties of what the child has done

- Praise them for trying to do something tricky. e.g. *"Well done! That was a hard jigsaw!"*. *"You are so clever - you can play on the swing all by yourself"*.

Keep on the look out for the good things they do

- Watch out for them being thoughtful, kind or helpful.
- Encourage your child by saying *"Thanks"* whenever you notice these.
- Emphasise the good efforts of what they have done for you, e.g. *"Thank you, tidying up your toys has really helped me"*.

Praise your child in front of other people

- Sing their praises! In front of your child, tell relatives and friends how pleased you are with him/her. Let everyone know about his or her achievements.

Consistency and clear limit setting

- Create an environment in which it is safe for your child to try new activities and fail.
- Consistent loving care and clear limit setting will protect your child's self-confidence and lead to a feeling of security.

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