

DEVELOPING SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE IN THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD

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To Develop Self-Confidence and Self-Reliance:

Through Encouragement:

1. Accept children the way they are right now.
2. Never do for children what they can do for themselves.
3. Give children responsibilities and jobs they can perform to contribute to the family.
4. Let them make decisions, gradually increasing their scope. They will make mistakes. Let them. Let them learn they can cope with mistakes, learn from them and do something about them.
5. Let them learn from unwise decisions.
6. Minimize fears. Acknowledge the fear but don't give extra sympathy or protection. Intimate that you have confidence in them and that they can cope with the situation.
7. Don't protect children from the ups and downs of life. When they are older you won't be able to, and it will be much harder for them if they have not learned that they can handle difficulties.
8. Let them try things for themselves.
9. Beware of high standards. They are more apt to discourage children and make them feel they can never be good enough to live up to them than to spur achievement.
10. Emphasize the effort, not the results, of a child's endeavors; e.g., the enjoyment of learning rather than the grade.

Through Courage to Make Mistakes:

1. Stop pointing out mistakes. Build on strengths. Look for and mention only strong points.
2. When you make a mistake, acknowledge it matter-of-factly. "Everyone makes mistakes."
3. When children get upset by mistakes they have made, concentrate on what they can do about it and what they have learned from it. Some of the best learning situations develop from a mistake utilized in a positive manner.
4. A mistake should be a friendly invitation to try again.

Through Physical Courage:

1. Let them defend themselves. Stay out of fights especially with siblings.
2. Don't make a fuss over bumps and bruises.
3. Acknowledge but don't give sympathy for hurt. Imply you know it is difficult, but that the child can cope. Quietly do what needs to be done to help.
4. Have confidence in their ability to take care of themselves--when left to their own judgment children will only attempt those acts they feel capable of mastering.

Through Accepting Disappointment:

1. Don't give sympathy; acknowledge that it is difficult but everyone has difficulty sometimes. Nothing that happens to children is as harmful as is someone feeling sorry for them because it happened to them.
2. Don't try to make it up to them.

Through Accepting Responsibility:

1. Never do for children what they can do for themselves.
2. Let them experience the consequences of forgetting or of a task undone. You don't do it and you don't say anything about it. If they complain, tell them you are sorry it came out that way but don't feel sorry for the child.
3. Don't keep reminding. Act if necessary but don't talk about it.
4. Give them ways to contribute to the group.