

# Self-esteem in Children

Know the signs of low self-esteem and discover  
simple ideas to help



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# **Self Esteem**

Self-esteem isn't fixed, and everyone will have different levels of confidence. If your child has lower self-esteem, signs might include:

- Comparing themselves to other people
- Negative self-talk
- Blaming themselves for things
- Persistent fear of failure
- Trying to please others
- Getting defensive when they think they're being criticised
- Avoiding certain situations
- Lack of motivation
- Neglecting or even abusing themselves (in more severe cases)

Spotting one of these signs in your child doesn't immediately mean you need to worry. But try to take notice more often of how your child feels about themselves. This will help you see how you might best support them.

## **How to Help**

Begin by looking for chances to spend more time together. This could be playing games or watching TV together - this is up to you and your child. Having fun together and making sure they feel loved is a great start. From here, you can judge a good time to explore ideas of self-esteem.

### **Get them to try spotting their 'negative' thoughts**

See if they're happy to tell you how things are going in their lives. You may have noticed them saying negative things about themselves. Ask why they feel that way.

Do they seem OK talking about this? Explain that thoughts may not always affect reality but can affect our behaviour. Encourage them to start noticing negative thinking patterns and question them. Some of the activities below will help your child to start reflecting on this.

### **Activity: the thoughts diary**

>> *Useful to help your child identify positive things about themselves. Works well with any age.*

Keeping a diary with your child can help both of you to identify daily successes and things that have gone well. When we're feeling bad about ourselves, we often forget to notice these things. Ask your child to answer some of the questions below:

- Today I had fun when...
- I helped someone to...
- Something I did well today was...
- A nice thing someone did for me today was..
- Today was interesting because...
- I felt good about myself today when...
- I felt proud today when...

### **Activity: social media**

>> *Useful for looking at using social media in a healthy way. Works well with teenagers.*

Have a chat with your child about whether social media has ever made them feel less confident. It might be useful to:

- Ask why they enjoy social media
- Find out what aspects of media appeals to them - this can help gauge why they follow certain people and post certain things
- Get your child to think about whether or not 'likes' on a photo or post is valuable feedback. Reflect on what you put on social media – you are the model.
- Consent – talk to your child about what they would agree to have posted on both their social media pages and yours. Always ask their consent before posting images of them on your feed
- Talk to them about the differences between admiration and jealousy. This can help them see the people they follow as role models rather than someone to compare themselves to.
- Discuss how what they see online doesn't always reflect real life. You could use advertisement for this - mascara advertising for example.

- Play a game where you guess if photos on social media have a filter or not. How easy is it to tell? Why might someone use a filter?
- Ask them about what a social influencer is/ how they get paid and what the risks might be associated to this. I.e. Are they following a true real person or someone who Photoshops images. Look together at different influencers to decide whether they might be sharing 'true images of themselves and whether they have their own issues with self esteem. E.g Molly-mae off Love Island, Selena Gomez (135 million followers)

## **Bridge the Gap Child Mental Health**

