



Parent Assignment #2: Grade 3

Healthy self-esteem is a child's armor against the challenges of the world. Kids who feel good about themselves seem to have an easier time handling conflicts and resisting negative pressures. They tend to smile more readily and enjoy life. These kids are realistic and generally optimistic. In contrast, kids with low self-esteem can find challenges to be sources of major anxiety and frustration.



Signs of Healthy and Unhealthy Self-Esteem

Self-esteem fluctuates as kids grow. It's frequently changed and fine-tuned, because it is affected by a child's experiences and new perceptions. So it helps to be aware of the signs of both healthy and unhealthy self-esteem.

Kids with healthy self-esteem tend to enjoy interacting with others. They're comfortable in social settings and enjoy group activities as well as independent pursuits. When challenges arise, they can work toward finding solutions and voice discontent without belittling themselves or others. For example, rather than saying, "I'm an idiot," a child with healthy self-esteem says, "I don't understand this." They know their strengths and weaknesses, and accept them. A sense of optimism prevails.

Kids with low self-esteem may not want to try new things, and may frequently speak negatively about themselves: "I'm stupid," "I'll never learn how to do this," or "What's the point? Nobody cares about me anyway." They may exhibit a low tolerance for frustration, giving up easily or waiting for somebody else to take over. They tend to be overly critical of and easily disappointed in themselves. Kids with low self-esteem see temporary setbacks as permanent, intolerable conditions, and a sense of pessimism predominates.

How Parents Can Help

How can a parent help to foster healthy self-esteem in a child? These tips can make a big difference:

Watch what you say. Kids are very sensitive to parents' words. Remember to praise your child not only for a job well done, but also for effort. But be truthful. For example, if your child doesn't make the soccer team, avoid saying something like, "Well, next time you'll work harder and make it." Instead, try "Well, you didn't make the team, but I'm really proud of the effort you put into it." Reward effort and completion instead of outcome.

Be a positive role model. If you're excessively harsh on yourself, pessimistic, or unrealistic about your abilities and limitations, your child may eventually mirror you. Nurture your own self-esteem, and your child will have a great role model.

Identify and redirect your child's inaccurate beliefs. It's important for parents to identify kids' irrational beliefs about themselves, whether they're about perfection, attractiveness, ability, or anything else. Helping kids set more accurate standards and be more realistic in evaluating themselves will help them have a healthy self-concept. Inaccurate perceptions of self can take root and become reality to kids. For example, a child who does very well in school but struggles with math may say, "I can't do math. I'm a bad student." Not only is this a false generalization, it's also a belief that will set the child up for failure. Encourage kids to see a situation in its true light. A helpful response might be: "You are a good student. You do great in school. Math is just a subject that you need to spend more time on. We'll work on it together."

Give positive, accurate feedback. Comments like "You always work yourself up into such a frenzy!" will make kids feel like they have no control over their outbursts. A better statement is, "You were really mad at your brother. But I appreciate that you didn't yell at him or hit him." This acknowledges a child's feelings, rewards the choice made, and encourages the child to make the right choice again next time.

Help kids become involved in constructive experiences. Activities that encourage cooperation rather than competition are especially helpful in fostering self-esteem. For example, mentoring programs in which an older child helps a younger one learn to read can do wonders for both kids.

Source: <http://kidshealth.org>

Assignment

Ask your child to review the day's lesson, and handouts with you. Discuss their feelings about the lesson, and any issues that may have come up for them that day in school.

Choose one or more of the following:

1. Allow your child to "teach" you something that you did not know, or a skill that can be improved. This will give you quality time together as well as build self-confidence in your child.
2. If your child has an interest in art or drawing, promote self-esteem by providing children with art supplies. Help children discover who they are, promote and encourage their interest in gardening, dance, reading, music, animals etc, and allow children to do for themselves what they are capable of doing safely. Go out to a museum, plant some flowers or vegetable garden, or go to a ball game.
3. After-school sports or other after-school activities help build self-confidence and a spirit of teamwork, which are important character traits to be learned. Be loving and firm in giving children activities or chores, offer choices of chores to be done so they can learn how to make decisions, and learn consequences of decision-making.
4. Create an album or wall of accomplishments that displays awards, photos and highlights achievements. These positive reminders of a child's successes will help to keep their confidence high.
5. Involvement in the community strengthens a child's identity and roots. Volunteer together at your religious organization, food bank, nursing home or other community programs.



Livingston Youth and Community Services

Parent Assignment #2: Grade 3 Positive Self Identity

Student's Name: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Which assignment did you choose, and why? _____

Was this lesson helpful? Yes/ No

Please explain _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Raffle Entry

Parent Assignment #2: Grade 3 Positive Self Identity

Student's Name: _____ Parent's Name: _____

School: _____ Grade 3

Please complete this sheet and return to LYCS, PO Box 822, Livingston, NJ 07039,
Fax: 973-992-9318, email: lycs@livingston.org, or leave at reception in school