



## How to Build Confidence

Self-confidence is an essential ingredient for all aspects of your child's healthy development and a key component for school success.

### How does self-confidence develop?

Babies are born with no sense of themselves as separate and distinct beings. They learn who they are through their interactions and experiences with others. In large part, a child's sense of confidence is shaped and nurtured (or not) by those who care for them.

### How to build self-confidence through everyday interactions

- **Establish routines with your child.** When events are predictable and happen in the same way and around the same time each day, your child feels safe and in control of their world. When life doesn't feel like it makes sense or seems incredibly unpredictable, it will likely feel too scary for your child to explore and learn.
- **Allow your child to play.** Play is how children learn about themselves, other people, and the world around them. Play will also help your child learn how to problem solve (for example, putting the triangle in the right spot, catching the ball), which also boosts confidence.
- **Help your child learn to be a problem-solver.** Don't rush to solve your child's problems every time. Be there to scaffold, if need be. Allow your child to feel successful on his or her own. Often, when your child is feeling most frustrated, it is actually an opportunity for them to develop feelings of confidence and competence.
- **Give your child responsibilities.** Your child likes feeling useful and needed. Jobs should be age-appropriate. Your child can help you sort laundry, feed pets, or pick up toys. Be specific about what is expected and say please! Celebrate your child's successes and remember to praise the process, not the outcome.
- **Encourage your child to try to get better at tasks they are struggling with.** Children learn by doing. Break down difficult tasks into easy steps to help your child feel in control and confident. Let your child know that you believe in them, but also that you won't be disappointed if they don't feel ready to master a task yet.
- **Provide language that shows understanding and empathy.** "You tried to put your rain boots on by all by yourself! This one looks like it might need an extra tug. It's hard to put boots on all the way, but you're getting closer."
- **Be a role model.** If you can model determination, your child will learn confidence from you too.