



# *Formative Parenting*

*Cultivating Character in Children*

*A Ministry of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Immaculata, Pennsylvania*

## ***Establishing a Foundation for Authentic Self-Esteem, Part 1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS***

Dear Parent,

Your child develops self-esteem in stages. This development begins at birth. Each stage of development has a particular focus and each new stage of development builds upon the previous stage(s). While a new stage of development is in progress, it is important to continue developing the focus points of previous stages. For example, the focus of development from the time your child was conceived until about age two was SECURITY. Your child learned to have a sense of TRUST or CONFIDENCE very early in life. However, it is essential that your child maintain that inner attitude or even improve it with each passing year. You can help to maintain or further the development of it and of the other basic elements of self-esteem through your parenting practices.

This newsletter provides an overview of the four stages of self-esteem growth that need to be established between birth and eighth grade. The article includes a profile description of a child who has a healthy sense of the focus issue. It also suggests factors that foster the development or growth of the focus issue. You can translate those factors into parenting practices that you exercise with consistency and you will help your child to develop positive self-esteem.

Subsequent future newsletters will each focus on an isolated issue of self-esteem development and a sampling of parenting practices will be provided. The practices were suggested by parents of children who have good self-esteem.

Now and forever, remember that you are never alone in your efforts to parent. The work of parenting is God's work. So during your efforts and especially during trying times remember that "God who has begun the good work will carry it through to completion." (Philippians 1: 6) Take your cares to Him.

## An Overview of the Elements That Foster Self Esteem

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SECURITY</b> Initially established between conception and age 2</p> <p><b>Profile:</b> The child feels confident that needs will be met; feels safe, protected and sheltered -- physically and emotionally; self-confident; able to depend on others; has inner certainty that all matters can be resolved satisfactorily; can predict with certainty the support or help of parents, family and significant others; is generally hopeful and hope-filled.</p> <p><b>Factors that foster SECURITY (also known as Trust and Confidence):</b> routine; system; consistency; procedure; predictability; safety precautions; "What you say is what you do"; "Say what you mean and mean what you say".</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AUTONOMY</b> Initially established between ages 2 and 4</p> <p><b>Profile:</b> The child has confident expectation that choices will lead to success vs. undue doubt or shame; has a sense of dignity and lawful independence; is self-governing, does not need outside control; is responsibly independent; has a sense of appropriateness and personal boundaries or limits; does whatever he/she is capable of doing; is assertive without being aggressive; is a risk taker in age-appropriate ways; is inner directed.</p> <p><b>Factors that foster AUTONOMY:</b> Permit/expect child to do whatever he/she is capable of doing; have reasonable, age-appropriate expectations; reduce the possibility of failure by limiting choices to manageable tasks; avoid shaming child for unacceptable behavior or failure.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INITIATIVE</b> Initially established between ages 4 to 6</p> <p><b>Profile:</b> The child is a self-starter; takes pleasure in conquering tasks, assignments, etc., aims high and does not settle for less than his/her "personal best"; has the personal, inner power or ability to originate plans, projects, game rules, use of free time, etc.; assumes responsibility for obtaining whatever is needed to complete a task, etc.; does not feel overly guilty when he/she makes a mistake but learns from it.</p> <p><b>Factors that foster INITIATIVE:</b> exposure to varieties of interests and activities; establish responsibilities and chores; set time frames; decision making with accompanying consequences; praise process more than product; expect child to assume responsibility for outcomes; adult modeling of how to recover after mistakes; do for the child only what he/she is incapable of doing for self; avoid making public comparisons of relative ability.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INDUSTRY</b> Initially established between ages 6 to 12</p> <p><b>Profile:</b> The child finishes whatever he/she starts; is productive; gives STEADY care to projects; is diligent and care-filled; works systematically; experiences a sense of accomplishment on a repeated basis; has confidence in his/her ability to complete with satisfaction whatever age-appropriate task is given.</p> <p><b>Factors that foster INDUSTRY:</b> steady care; follow-through; productivity; activities that have several parts; adult modeling of finishing what one starts; long range planning; time management; household routines and time expectations; "Plan your work and work your plan"; working side by side with an adult to complete long range projects related to home, neighborhood, etc.</p>

**Dear Parent,**

**At this time in your child's life, what parenting practices will develop, maintain or remediate your child's sense of security, autonomy, initiative or industry?**

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