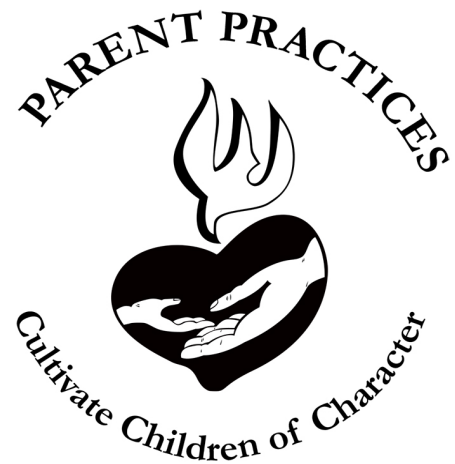


5 Keys of Self-Esteem



Positive self-esteem forms when children experience a steady dose of security, autonomy, initiative and industry practices within an atmosphere that demonstrates that a person is valued regardless of his/her performance or status. We communicate genuine love when we show respect in attitude and speech, include and individualize, validate, encourage, express gratitude, keep confidences, affirm, and show pleasure. Through every age and every stage apply the following advice punctuated with genuine affection.

- **SECURITY, or stability**, is the sense of trust, emotional safety, and confidence that my needs will receive predictable response from the significant people in my life and situation. With this assurance, my energies are available to deal with unpredictable stresses.

We nurture security when we establish routine, procedure, and system. Organize the environment to be purposeful. Initiate safety precautions – both physical and emotional. Provide attentiveness and inclusion. Demonstrate consistency, continuity, and predictability. Keep promises. Anticipate needs.

“Say what you mean and mean what you say!”

“Take care that what you say is what you do!”

- **INITIATIVE, or self-confidence** to be a self-starter, is the interior motivation to originate plans and the personal capacity to conquer tasks without coaxing.

We nurture initiative when we expose children to varied experiences, give patient, respectful answers to their questions, enforce natural consequences, establish standards and deadlines, balance personal freedom with responsibility to the common good, encourage prudent risk taking, intervene as a last step, model how to recover from a mistake, and provide materials, tools, and resources that support varied interests.

“Value ideas and process more than product.”

“Model how to recover from mistakes.”

- **AUTONOMY, or self-reliance**, is the sense of respectful independence, inner authority, and responsibility that permits me to make appropriate decisions without the need of supervision.

We nurture autonomy when we provide prudent supervision but not intrusion. Encourage rather than praise. Provide choices. Foster responsible independence. Teach respectful assertiveness. Expect accountability for choices and consequences. Foster self-control.

“Do nothing for a child that the child can do independently.”

“Emphasize effort more than result.”

- **INDUSTRY, OR WORK ETHIC**, is the capacity to be persistent and diligent, to follow through on a task, and to create a systematic approach for problem solving and responsibilities.

We nurture industry when we guide children to work steadily to complete tasks, to manage time, to anticipate deadlines, and to develop organizational skills.

“Plan your work and work your plan.”

“If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.”

“Actions speak louder than words.”

“What you do speaks so loudly that a child cannot hear what you are saying.”