

Developing a self-confident child

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Philippians 4:13

I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

As parents, teachers and school leaders, a very important job that we have is to develop young children who are confident and able to take the world by storm. God calls us to bring up children in His word. We need to allow children to grow in their own confidence while being within the safety net of home.

Confidence is believing in yourself and what you can achieve. It includes the way you behave in circumstances and how you react to challenges that you may encounter. A child who is confident wants to explore and learn, they are willing to take on new activities, and expect others to join in.

Self-confidence is an integral part of social interactions such as making friends, competition and sharing. A self-confident child will always expect a good outcome from relationships and will not feel threatened by having to interact with others.

Self-confidence under the right circumstances will start developing naturally and will progress with age. Through nurturing, love and encouragement a child will start realising their natural strengths and what makes them special. The people who care for the child are instrumental in this.

The first three years are crucial in getting this development going. Let's look at Jenni.



As a tiny new baby Jenni will cry and be immediately cuddled and comforted by a parent. This teaches her that she is loved and important to the family.

Jenni is now starting to crawl and pull herself up. Immediately she is praised and celebrated. The baby is now learning that she is a problem solver and is able to conquer obstacles.

Jenni is 2-years old. She can't reach her bunny on the bookshelf so she grabs her little chair and climbs onto it. With some stretching she is able to reach it. Her mom is surprised as she is sure she had put it away. Realising what has happened her mom praises her and allows her to play for a while. Jenni realises that her needs and interests are important and she is supported in this.

Jenni is now just over three and upset because her parents are going on a date night and they have the cheek to go without her, leaving her with Granny. She is upset and crying. Mom and Dad take the time to comfort her and make sure that she is ok before they leave.

This shows her that her feelings are important and that



people will respond to her when she is upset.

Steps you can take to develop self confidence in you child:

Plan, plan and plan some more

Allow your child to understand what you expect from them in a certain situation; explain what you will be doing and what they need to do. This affords them the opportunity to prepare for the event and be confident when walking into a strange environment.

Start off small

If your child gets easily flustered or overwhelmed, start by introducing small, familiar groups and use this time to guide him on how best to react, share and play with others. As they start feeling more confident and relaxed you can expand the group.



Don't push

By pushing your child to be more involved, do more and do better, you might just be doing the opposite.

Allow for gradual improvement.

Don't be a helicopter

Allow your child to explore and make mistakes.

Allow them to fall down every once in a while and then pick themselves up again. I often say "they will only do it incorrectly the first time. Next time they will know not to jump off the higher step". Give them a gentle nudge and encourage them to explore and discover things for themselves without you getting involved all the time

Encourage and Compliment

Recognise each achievement, regardless of how small it is. Words make a huge difference and praising your child for little things makes for big confidence. Remember to also praise them publicly and allow them to see that you are proud of them when other people are around.

Above all, express lots and lots of love. Don't stress about the small things, allow them to make mistakes, praise the little things and the big things. Make them understand how much you love and appreciate them for who they are and what they can do.

Remember FAIL: **F**irst **A**tttempt **I**n **L**earning

Psalm 139:13-14

You are the one who put me together inside my mother's body, and I praise you because of the wonderful way you created me. Everything you do is marvellous! Of this, I have no doubt.