

HELPING YOUR CHILD FEEL SUCCESSFUL

by
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Well, end of term exams are around the corner and we all want our children to excel. The key to unlocking your child's potential is helping them to feel successful – not just for the upcoming exams but also throughout their childhood. To help your child see himself as a successful and worthwhile person:

- Ø Rejoice in your child's achievements, even small gains.
- Ø Give your child responsibilities in the home. Everyone, no matter how small, feels bigger if she/he is a contributing member of society. Bring him/her in on decisions of what he is to do.
- Ø Trust your child to take responsibility for him/herself. Expect the positive from him/her rather than negative – we tend to live up to other's expectations of us.
- Ø Help your child to set realistic goals based on something he/she wants to change or achieve, then help him/her to develop a plan of action to attain the goal.
- Ø Respect your child's right to make and learn from his mistakes. Let him/her work out his/her own solutions to his/her own problems as far as possible. Listen, reflect feelings, support – but avoid 'handing down' unsolicited solutions, advice and judgments.
- Ø Support your child's interests and talents. Provide him/her with time, help and materials to pursue and develop hobbies and skills.
- Ø Reward and reinforce positive behaviour; ignore negative behaviour as much as possible. Focus on your child's strengths rather than weaknesses.
- Ø Teach your child the skills of self help (caring for his/her physical, using household equipment) as soon as he/she is ready. A sense of independence, of "I can do it myself" gives a gigantic boost to anyone's self-esteem.

- Ø Use the audio or video tape recorder as an aid to self-discovery and understanding. Play tapes done at different times to show the child's improvement in self-expression. This can also be done with family pictures showing the child's progress over time.

- Ø Finally, and perhaps most importantly, cultivate your own self-esteem. When you respect your own needs as a separate individual, when you take yourself seriously, your child learns a valuable lesson about the worth of his/her own self. The happy, growing, fulfilled parent who genuinely likes himself can not only fulfill his child's needs but also serves as a positive model for the child.