



Learning at Your Fingertips

Parenting 2.0



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Overview

It's often been said that children learn what they live. So if you're looking for a place to start helping your child build positive self esteem and self value, then you should show them your positive sense of self and strong self esteem. Be positive when you speak about yourself and highlight your strengths. This will teach your child that it's okay to be proud of their talents, skills and abilities.



Developing A Child's Self Esteem

Self-esteem is a major key to success in life. The development of a positive self-concept or healthy self-esteem is extremely important to the happiness and success of children and teenagers. This page will share the basics for helping kids and teens to improve their self-esteem. It will also point you to other Child Development Institute (CDI) pages and CDI products that can help you to improve your child's or teenager's self-esteem.



Developing A Child's Self Esteem

Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves, and our behavior clearly reflects those feelings. For example, a child or teen with high self-esteem will be able to:

- act independently
- assume responsibility
- take pride in his accomplishments
- tolerate frustration
- attempt new tasks and challenges
- handle positive and negative emotions
- offer assistance to others



Developing A Child's Self Esteem

On the other hand, a child with low self-esteem will:

- avoid trying new things
- feel unloved and unwanted
- blame others for his own shortcomings
- feel, or pretend to feel, emotionally indifferent
- be unable to tolerate a normal level of frustration
- put down his own talents and abilities
- be easily influenced



Developing A Child's Self Esteem

Parents, more than anyone else can promote their child's self-esteem. It isn't a particularly difficult thing to do. In fact, most parents do it without even realizing that their words and actions have great impact on how their child or teenager feels about himself. Here are some suggestions to keep in mind.



Developing A Child's Self Esteem

When you feel good about your child, mention it to him or her. Parents are often quick to express negative feelings to children but somehow don't get around to describing positive feelings. A child doesn't know when you are feeling good about him or her and he or she needs to hear you tell him or her that you like having him or her in the family.



Developing A Child's Self Esteem

Be generous with praise. Use what is called descriptive praise to let your child know when they are doing something well. You must of course become in the habit of looking for situations in which your child is doing a good job or displaying a talent. When your child completes a task or chore you could say, "I really like the way you straightened your room. You found a place for every thing and put each thing in its place."



The Family Chip System

If your child is having a lot of difficulty getting along at home consider using the “Family Chip System.” This is a very powerful tool. When used consistently, most children will show great improvement within just a few weeks. The program provides immediate reward for appropriate behavior and immediate consequences for inappropriate behavior.



The Family Chip System

By the way, if you have other children around the same age as the child for whom you are designing this program, put them on the program as well. Children really like this system. Parents love the system.

Here are the steps to follow to use this program with your child:

1. Purchase a box of poker chips from the drug store.



The Family Chip System

2. Hold a family meeting to discuss the need for the program. Tell the children that it will help them to learn to be in charge of themselves. You can tell older children that this system is similar to what adults experience: (1) Adults earn money for working; (2) Adults have to pay fines for breaking rules like speeding or make a late payment; (3) Adults spend their money on things they need as well as a few things they want.



The Family Chip System

3. Develop a list of behaviors they will earn chips for. Start with the morning and then go throughout the day looking for behaviors to reward. These can include positive attitude, self-help behaviors and chores. If you are using a behavior modification program for school you can give them chips for each point earned on that system. Some possibilities are: getting up on time, brushing teeth, getting ready for school on time, playing nicely with brother or sister, completing chores such as feeding a pet or taking out the trash, saying please and thank you, doing things the first time they are asked, doing homework without a fuss, getting ready for bed on time, going to bed on time, cleaning bedroom.



The Family Chip System

4. Agree on a list of behaviors that result in a loss of chips. These can include behaviors that are oppositional, defiant or disruptive. Some examples are: tantrums, yelling, screaming, fighting, arguing, throwing things, jumping on the furniture, getting up after bed time, swearing, putting others down. (Some more serious behaviors will receive a Time Out as well as a fine).



The Family Chip System

5. Agree on a list of privileges they will earn and pay for with chips. Some privileges will be bought for the day, others will be bought for a period of time (usually 1/2 hour). These can include: watching TV, playing outside, computer time, renting their bike or other large toy, playing a game with a parent, etc.



The Family Chip System

5. Agree on a list of privileges they will earn and pay for with chips. Some privileges will be bought for the day, others will be bought for a period of time (usually 1/2 hour). These can include: watching TV, playing outside, computer time, renting their bike or other large toy, playing a game with a parent, etc.



The Family Chip System

6. Suggestions of Rewards for Kids

Home Reward Possibilities for Preschoolers

- Going to the park
- Listening to a bedtime story
- Playing with friends
- Spending the night with friends or grandparents
- Playing games
- Going out for ice cream
- Finger painting
- Computer time
- Staying up an hour later



The Family Chip System

Home Reward Possibilities for Elementary School Children

- Taking time off from chores
- Going to a ball game
- Camping in the backyard
- Ordering pizza
- Choosing a special breakfast
- Eating out
- Planning a day's activities
- Sleeping in a different place in the house
- Taking a trip to the park
- Selecting something special for dinner



The Family Chip System

Home Reward Possibilities for Teenagers

- Having dating privileges
- Having friends over
- Taking dancing or music lessons
- Making a trip alone
- Taking the car to school for a day
- Having car privileges
- Getting to stay out late
- Getting to sleep in late on the weekend
- Going to a concert with friends
- Having their own cell phone



The Family Chip System

7. Assign point values to each item on the list. See the sample below:

Earn Chips For:

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Making bed | 2 |
| Picking up Bedroom | 2 |
| Brushing Teeth | 2 |
| Setting the Table | 4 |
| Ready for Bed on time | 2 |
| Going to Bed on time | 2 |
| Doing thing first time asked | 1 |
| Saying please and thank you | 1 |



The Family Chip System

7. Assign point values to each item on the list.
See the sample below:

Lose Chips For:

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Throwing things | 4 + timeout |
| Tantrums | 4 + timeout |
| Arguing | 2 |
| Interrupting | 2 |
| Running in the house | 2 |



The Family Chip System

7. Assign point values to each item on the list.
See the sample below:

Privileges to Spend Chips For:

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Watching TV | 5 chips per ½ hr |
| Playing outside | 5 chips |
| Rent bike | 5 chips for the day |
| Going to friends | 10 chips |
| Playing game with parent | 5 chips |



The Family Chip System

Practice giving and receiving chips before starting the program. The practice should be based on the rules for parent and children provided below:



Rules for Parents: Giving Chips

- Be near your child and able to touch him (not 20 feet or two rooms away).
- Look at your child and smile.
- Use a pleasant voice tone.
- Make sure your child is facing you and looking at you.
- Praise your child “Hey that’s great. You’re really doing a nice job. That’s really helping me.” Reward you child with chips “Here’s 2 chips for doing a great job.”



Rules for Parents: Giving Chips

- Describe the appropriate behavior for your child so he know exactly what behavior he is being praised and rewarded for.
- Hug your child occasionally or use some other form of positive touch.
- Have your child acknowledge you such as, “Thanks Mom” or “O.K.”



Rules for Parents: Taking Away Chips

- Be near you child and able to touch him.
- Look at your child and smile.
- Use a pleasant voice tone.
- Make sure your child is facing you and looking at you.
- Explain what was inappropriate such as “Remember you are not allowed to run in the house because it is not safe.” “You need to learn not to yell and scream so we can enjoy being together at home.”



Rules for Parents: Taking Away Chips

- Be sympathetic. “I know it’s hard to lose chips but that’s the rule.”
- Give your child the chip fine.
- Make sure your child gets the chip appropriately.
- Prompting the appropriate responses will sometimes be necessary. For example, “Come on, give me a smile—That’s right.”



Rules for Parents: Taking Away Chips

- If a chip loss is taken very well by your child, it is a good idea to give him back a chip or two.
- If your child is too mad or upset to give you the chips, don't force the issue. Place your child in time out (to cool off) and then get the chips.



Rules for Children When Getting Chips

- You should be facing your parents, looking at them and smiling.
- You should acknowledge the chips by saying “O.K.,” “Thanks,” or something else pleasant.
- The chips should be put in a specified container. (Any chips left lying around are lost.)



Rules for Children When Losing Chips

- You should face your parents, look at them and smile (not frown.)
- You should acknowledge the chip loss with “O.K.” or “All right,” “I’ll get the chips,” etc. (You must keep looking at them and be pleasant).
- You should give the chips to your parents pleasantly
- Post the list of behaviors and chips earned in a convenient place.



Rules for Children When Losing Chips

- Let your child decorate a paper cup in which to keep their chips. Place the “bank’s” chips in a jar or bowl and put it in a place that is out of reach of children.
- Start using the program. Feel free to modify the program at any time by holding a meeting. Sometimes point values need to be raised or lowered to achieve a goal. You may add or remove items from the list as well.



Rules for Children When Losing Chips

- After about 6 weeks, you may be able to start short trials off the system. Say, “Today we are going to try not using the chip system. If things go well we will try it again the next day.” If the trial is successful continue for about a week. If things continue to go well, hold a meeting and celebrate all that you and your child have both gained from the system. If your child is not ready, continue with the program.

Note: If your child runs out of chips, have a list of extra chores they can do to earn chips so that they remain on the system.



Parental Discipline

Guidelines For Parental Discipline

- Never disagree about discipline in front of the children.
- Never give an order, request, or command without being able to enforce it at the time.
- Be consistent, that is, reward or punish the same behavior in the same manner as much as possible.
- Agree on what behavior is desirable and not desirable.



Parental Discipline

- Agree on how to respond to undesirable behavior.
- Make it as clear as possible what the child is to expect if he or she performs the undesirable behavior.
- Make it very clear what the undesirable behavior is. It is not enough to say, “Your room is messy.” Messy should be specified in terms of exactly what is meant: “You’ve left dirty clothes on the floor, dirty plates on your desk, and your bed is not made.”



Parental Discipline

- Once you have stated your position and the child attacks that position, do not keep defending yourself. Just restate the position once more and then stop responding to the attacks.
- Remember that your behavior serves as a model for your children's behavior.
- If one of you is disciplining a child and the other enters the room, that other person should not step in on the argument in progress.



Parental Discipline

- Reward desirable behavior as much as possible by verbal praise, touch or something tangible such as a toy, food or money.
- Both of you should have an equal share in the responsibility of discipline as much as possible.



Summary

Most importantly, tell your child “I love you” each and every day – many times throughout the day, in fact. When they’ve behaved badly, remind yourself that it’s not them you don’t like, only their behavior. Tuck short, sweet notes in their lunchboxes or coat pockets, or even send them a card in the mail. Soon, they’ll learn to say “I love you” just as easily and honestly in return.

