



Family Front and Centre

A Support Resource
Promoting Healthy Child Development

Book 5

Self Esteem

- Attachment
- Attention
- Anxiety
- Aggression
- **Self Esteem**



www.familyfrontandcentre.com

Les Services
d'Aide à la
Famille Juive

de l'Institut Baron de Hirsch



Jewish
Family
Services

of the Baron de Hirsch Institute

National Advisory Committee

Nancy Engels

Project Coordinator, JFS

Lisa Fiorentino

Writer/Researcher

Susan Karpman

Director, Family and Children's Services, JFS

Marilyn Turnley

Health Canada Consultant

JoAnn Gillan

Kristie Gomuwka

Myrna Martin

Kate O'Brodovich

Lynda Stewart

Irene Szabla

Annette Thexton

Michelle Ward

Consultants

Andrea Borod editing

Rebekah Frojmovic research assistant

Jacinte Gauvin translation/adaptation

Carey Gold marketing/website consultant

Davina Mill clinical consultant

Richard F. Schmid evaluation

Rose Marie Scissons research/indexer

David Wells evaluation

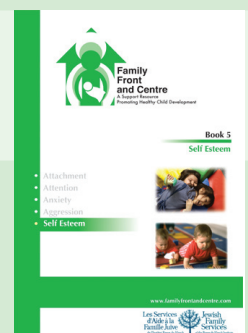
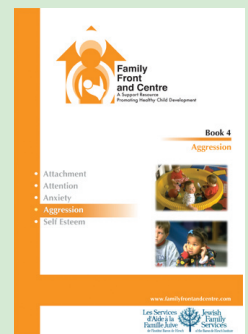
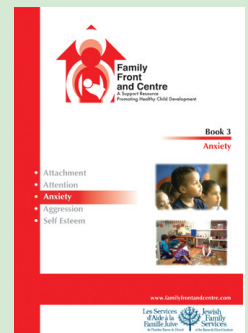
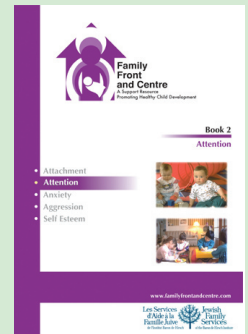
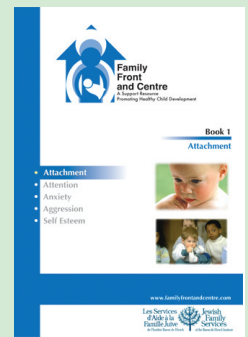
Self Esteem book 5

Family Front and Centre A Support Resource Promoting Healthy Child Development

Production of this document has been made possible by a financial contribution from the CAPC/CPNP National Projects Fund, Health Canada.

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the official policies of Health Canada.

© 2004 Jewish Family Services of the Baron de Hirsch Institute.
ISBN 0-9734557-6-4



What is **SELF ESTEEM ?**

Self esteem can be defined as the way an individual perceives him/herself. The development of a healthy self esteem begins during pregnancy and infancy, when infants and caregivers establish an emotional bond. As children get older their social experiences and experiences with success and disappointment affect their development of high or low self esteem. A healthy level of self esteem is important, yet it is not unusual for children to experience low self esteem sometimes. However, a low level of self esteem may become a concern if the child's behaviours are unusually intense, and occur frequently within different contexts.

Inside this book:

- ↑ A description of the development of self esteem from infancy until six years of age, highlighting developmental issues for the specific age groups.
- ↑ Factors that affect the development of self esteem, including a discussion of when children may be at risk for more serious self esteem problems.
- ↑ A list of strategies and activities to help children with their self esteem.
- ↑ A glossary of terms.

Infants (0-18 months)

Infants are not born with a fully developed sense of self esteem, which is how an individual perceives him/herself. Most of their time is spent getting to know their caregivers, new surroundings, and in having their needs met quickly. Through the relationships that develop with their caregivers, infants develop expectations about their environment and how they fit into it. These expectations play a critical role in the development of self esteem because an infant whose expectations are fulfilled learns that he/she is important and that his/her needs are valued.

The Development of Emotional Bonds

During pregnancy and the months following birth, infants develop emotional bonds with their caregivers. Infants interact with their caregivers through feeding, receiving comfort, or by engaging in play and other activities. These early emotional ties are the building blocks for developing positive self esteem and the development of social relationships.

The development of emotional bonds starts in early infancy, but the strength of these bonds develops over time. These emotional bonds remain a part of the infant's ongoing relationship with his/her caregivers.

As infants learn about their surroundings, they develop memories for new experiences. To each new memory, a feeling or emotion attaches itself.

Evren is 5 months old and plays a game of peek-a-boo with his dad. During the game, Evren is excited and expresses his joy through smiles and joyous exclamations. As they continue to play, Evren starts waving his hands together and produces a clapping sound. Evren is pleased with the new sound he has made and proceeds to clap whenever his dad shows his face and exclaims, "Peek-a-boo!"

Evren develops an emotional bond with his father. Together they share a fun experience, and Evren experiences an emotional response and demonstrates learning. He interacts with his father and feels pleasure while playing with his dad and expresses himself through smiles and joyous exclamations. These warm exchanges between the two of them convey the feelings of love and fun that they share. Evren also gains experience in social relationships through interacting with his father.

When infants communicate their needs and these needs are met, they learn that they can create change in their environment. In order for infants to feel comfortable with exploring their environment and understanding and interpreting their surroundings, they need consistency and dependability from their caregivers. A dependable environment consists of responsive, adaptive, and positive reactions from caregivers to their infants' needs. Responsiveness and adaptation help the infant to understand that their environment is stable and controlled, which helps build trust in infants. Positive responses from caregivers help babies feel that the environment is safe and that they are capable to explore. This feeling of capability is called **self efficacy**. Feeling capable and empowered to accomplish something plays a role in healthy self esteem since infants develop a positive view of self and experience self satisfaction at their accomplishments.

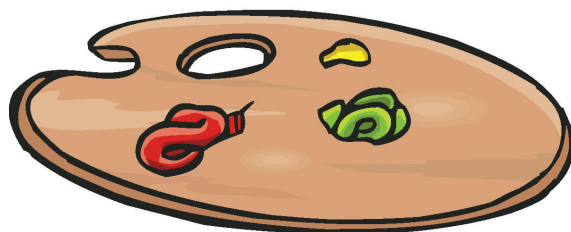
Social Communication

Between 10-12 months of age, infants begin to actively communicate their feelings. The emotions of infants become a social tool for communicating. The ability to communicate emotions relates to the infant's ability to **self regulate** his/her emotions. Infants learn how to self regulate through observing others and thus base their emotional expressions on others' emotional expressions. Caregivers are the first people from whom infants mirror their emotional expressions. Acquiring these emotional expressions helps infants develop such skills as communicating joy and learning patience to accept short periods of caregiver absence. Caregivers are the number one influence on infants and

their self esteem, teaching them that they are accepted, appreciated, and loved.

Toya, 18 months old, paints with her father. She has just finished making a painting and shows it to him. He says, "That is spectacular Toya! Your painting skills are great," he says and gives her a big hug. The next day, Toya colours pictures with her mom. When her mom is finished, Toya says, "Spec! Spec!" and gives her mom a hug.

In the above example, Toya uses the experience of her father's reaction to her painting and applies it to another experience. Her father's expression of joy helped her develop an appropriate way of expressing praise for an accomplishment such as art. Toya regulates her own emotional responses and is filled with joy at her mother's accomplishment. Her father serves as a role model for Toya's behaviours.



Dale, 18 months old, paints with his dad. As he reaches over to use the blue paint, Dale tips the paint all over the floor. Dale looks up at his dad who says, "What a big mess! How could you do that Dale?" Dale becomes quiet and starts to cry as his father cleans up the mess. A few days later, while playing in the bathtub with his mom, Dale splashes water all over the bathroom floor. Before his mother can say anything, Dale has become quiet and sullen and soon begins to cry.

Dale receives an angry reaction from his father when he spills the paint. His father's disappointment and exasperation lead Dale to feel sad. Dale learned from this experience, expressing feelings of shame the next time he had a similar accident. Dale may feel that his misbehaviour is a reflection of who he is. He has internalized the angry reaction from his dad and feels personal shame towards the accident.



Consider This...

Emotional bonds between infants and caregivers have the strength and malleability of a strong rubber band. These emotional ties can stretch in either direction, affecting both infant and caregiver, yet this strong and flexible bond remains joined together, impacting on later development of self esteem.

Toddlers (18 months-3 years)

Self Awareness and Discovery

Toddlers are known for their curiosity and excitement. As they explore, toddlers develop a view of themselves, or self esteem. Toddlers see themselves in simple terms, and their growing self awareness is reflected in a **positive** or **negative view of self**.

Hyojin, 2 1/2 years old, picks peas with her father in their garden. Hyojin has filled her basket to the top and is about to carry it over to her dad to show him. Hyojin struggles to pick up the basket and drops half of the peas on the ground. She says, "Uh-Oh, what a mess," and proceeds to clean it up. Her father notices her picking up the peas and says to her, "Hyojin that is a huge basket of peas! Let me help you clean that up!"

Hyojin expresses delight at her accomplishment of picking many peas, and she has a positive reaction towards spilling the peas on the ground. Instead of feeling embarrassment and shame, Hyojin feels fine about her accident and proceeds to fix the situation by picking up the peas. She may feel disappointed, but Hyojin demonstrates behaviours that are in accord with a positive view of self. She problem solves the situation, and finds a practical solution (i.e., clean up the mess). Hyojin does not take the situation personally either; she reflects on the situation and feels fine about spilling the peas and can find a solution to the problem. Having a positive view of self helps toddlers in their explorations and growing curiosity. They see themselves as **competent** and are able to learn, and have new experiences with a more positive attitude.

Marta, 3 years old, and her uncle are having fun with play-doh. They create a family of dinosaurs with green heads, purple bodies, and blue feet. Marta concentrates on making her dinosaur's body, and forgets to make the feet blue, making them purple instead. Her uncle notices the mistake and says, "Marta! You are doing it all wrong. They're supposed to be blue, not purple! Marta blushes and becomes embarrassed. She is frustrated and refuses to play. Marta leaves the room and does not return.

Marta's uncle conveys to her a negative attitude that could lead to Marta having a negative view of herself. When her uncle criticizes her, he speaks about her mix-up very personally, making her feel responsible and foolish for the mistake. While the play-doh mistake is her responsibility, she should not be made to feel that something is wrong with her. Marta is led to feel badly about herself in this situation. This feeling is unpleasant and can lead to feelings of shame and a negative attitude towards her abilities. A negative view of self may cause toddlers to feel less competent in situations and less able to problem solve and learn, including learning from their mistakes.

Rules and Consequences

Toddlers also begin to learn about rules and consequences for their behaviours. Caregivers often set limits and have realistic expectations for their toddlers' behaviours. These are important rules for toddlers to learn and follow. These limits give toddlers safe parameters within which to explore their environment. It also teaches them responsibility for their behaviours and they learn to be accountable for their behaviour choices. Rules give toddlers trust in their caregivers as they can rely on these rules and trust that their actions have consequences.

Social Acceptance

Social development is important for the development of competence and acceptance in toddlers. Toddlers learn through others' reactions to their behaviours whether they are capable of accomplishing tasks. If they feel recognized for their abilities and receive encouragement for their skills, this leads to a feeling of accomplishment, self efficacy and a healthy view of the self.

Toddlers need to feel accepted for who they are by others. They learn that their feelings are acknowledged and appreciated and that they have a voice and are worthy of love. Social acceptance also helps toddlers to feel special. All of these factors help build self confidence in toddlers and lead to a healthy self esteem.



Consider This...

As in the games that all children play, toddlers require rules and consistency in their environment. Consistency and an understanding of the rules help toddlers in predicting their environment as well as in helping toddlers to feel confident and competent towards their own actions, leading to a positive sense of self and a high self esteem.

Preschoolers (3-6 years)

Preschoolers are more independent and self-reliant. They also have social relationships with peers and adults other than their caregivers. These characteristics and social experiences contribute to preschoolers' development of high or low self-esteem.

Self Reliance

Preschoolers are more independent than toddlers. They still rely on their caregivers for rules and limits but are more independent while doing tasks. This growing self-reliance occurs while preschoolers are developing other skills that help them in their accomplishments:

- They have strong **motor skills** that allow them to run, jump, and play. They can also reach and use objects that they may have previously required help from their caregivers to use.
- They acquire cognitive and language skills that allow them to solve tasks and communicate ideas.
- Preschoolers are better able to regulate their emotions than toddlers, which makes them more skilled at coping with feelings of frustration.
- They have fantasy and imagination skills that make tasks more engaging and fun.

These skills and others affect a preschooler's development of self-reliance. These skills and abilities work together to promote a preschooler's independence, as they are now able to perform new tasks and require less help in accomplishing their goals.

Self-reliance is tied to preschoolers' development of self-esteem. Self-reliance enables preschoolers to master tasks and to feel a sense of accomplishment. Preschoolers develop a sense of responsibility and confidence within themselves, which leads to a healthy or higher self-esteem. Preschoolers with healthy self-esteem view themselves positively, are satisfied with themselves and have a positive outlook on life. These children also tend to be flexible in their routines and willing to take healthy risks since they have a higher self-efficacy than preschoolers with low self-esteem. Preschoolers who have low self-esteem have a negative view of themselves and lack self-confidence. They are less self-reliant, they depend on others to help them accomplish tasks, and experience frustration and lack tolerance when things do not go their way.

Lingering Dependency

Self reliance and independence are skills for preschoolers to acquire and work on. These skills enable preschoolers to problem solve and take healthy risks. Problem solving, experiencing successes and learning from mistakes lead to positive self esteem. Problem solving in particular is empowering for preschoolers as it helps them make decisions and find alternative solutions, leading to feelings of self efficacy and positive self esteem. Typical independence involves preschoolers asserting themselves, making decisions, and feeling respected as people.

Some preschoolers may find it hard to leave their feelings of dependency. While some amount of dependency is important and helpful, other preschoolers need to receive reassurance from their caregivers. This can delay or interfere with the development of self esteem since these children are not taking as many opportunities to assert themselves and experience accomplishments.

Ray is 5 years old and enjoys attending the local community centre. Today they have a fun activity where they mix different objects with water to see which dissolve in a glass of water. When Ray has difficulty understanding the directions for the experiments, he asks the camp leader Vikhram to help him. Vikhram happily answers Ray's questions, taking him through the steps of the experiment.

Ray's dependency is more specific as he needs help to accomplish a task. These dependent behaviours can be instrumental in helping the preschooler gain more independence and grow in their self esteem.

Cho, 4 years old, has attended the family community centre for 6 months. Cho has difficulty playing with her peers. She often follows one particular caregiver, Hope, seeking her attention. Cho spends much of the day following Hope instead of playing and making crafts with her fellow preschoolers.

Cho's need for reassurance and attention is an example of emotional dependency. This dependency can make it difficult for Cho to have social experiences with her peers and also experience successes on her own. The lack of experiences can lead to Cho feeling that she cannot rely on herself and that she is incapable or inadequate, all of which can lead to low self esteem.

Consider This...

Preschoolers are branching out in their development, which helps them grow strong and steady in their self reliance and self esteem. Sometimes, the roots of early childhood may cause preschoolers to become over dependent on their caregivers. Preschoolers need to nurture and grow strong in their self esteem so that they may flourish in new social interactions.

Factors That Affect Self Esteem

Environmental Factors

Factors in children's environments, such as their homes and child care centres, can affect the development of a healthy self esteem. For example, children living in households where there are stressful and challenging situations (e.g., a death in the family, parental divorce) may have difficulty experiencing positive interactions with their caregivers. Positive interactions lay the foundation for a positive self esteem. Caregivers who experience stress may have difficulty providing a comfortable and predictable environment where their children feel safe to experience successes and disappointments. Caregivers with low self esteem have difficulty displaying healthy levels of self esteem, especially if they lack support systems to help them cope.

The quality of the caregiver-child relationship directly affects child self esteem. Caregivers are the first adults whose behaviours are influential over children's self esteem. From pregnancy onward, babies develop an emotional bond with their caregivers. This bond helps children to experience trust, feel special, and understand that they are worthy of love. Children who have secure relationships are more likely to feel self reliant and capable, therefore developing a healthier self esteem.

Children with insecure attachment relationships with their caregivers are more likely to develop emotional dependency. Their interactions are less positive and warm and these children do not feel that they can depend on their caregivers, or that they have control over their environment. Feelings of insecurity can develop, which contribute to feeling inadequate and dependent on others for reassurance and attention.



Caregivers also use different 'parenting styles' that affect children's development of self esteem; the three dominant styles are **authoritative**, **permissive**, and **authoritarian***. Authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles represent opposite ends of the spectrum. The chart below distinguishes between these three:

Parenting Style	Behaviours	Possible Child Outcomes
Authoritative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish limits. • Explain reasoning behind limits. • Warm and affectionate interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy temperament. • Self-confident; feels competent. • Well-developed emotion regulation. • Development of social skills.
Permissive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disorganized care. • Inconsistent care. • Few demands are placed on the child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor emotion regulation. • Rebellious and defiant when desires are challenged. • Low persistence towards challenging tasks.
Authoritarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demanding on child. • Does not take child's point of view into account. • Lack of warm interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxious; withdrawn behaviours. • Unhappy temperament. • Poor reactions to frustration.

*based on Baumrind, 1967/97

Children benefit from positive and consistent caregiver communication that suggests warmth and empathy. Those who receive authoritative parenting are more likely to develop a healthy self esteem since their relationship is secure, instilling self acceptance and confidence within them. Authoritarian and permissive parenting can contribute to low self esteem because these caregiving styles do not promote trust, consistency, respect, and security within children.

Authoritarian parenting is a harsh form of discipline that is demanding and uses fear to ensure that children complete their tasks. Children learn from authoritarian parenting that their opinion counts for very little. This can prevent them from developing positive and confident perceptions of themselves. Permissive parenting places few demands on children, leading children to feel that there are no limits, consistency, or control in their environment. This can lead to a lower self esteem since children do not build confidence through these interactions. This style of caregiving also places no expectations on the children, giving them little or no opportunity to meet caregivers' expectations or master tasks that are set for them.

Sari draws pictures of flowers on the living room wall. Her mother, upon seeing Sari, tells her, "Sari, you know the rule is that drawings go on paper. You are not supposed to draw on the walls because it is difficult to clean." Sari looks up at her mom and says, "I forgot! I didn't mean to Mommy." Her mother tells her that she understands how sometimes people forget things that they are told, and she suggests that they find cleaning tools to help Sari remove her drawings.

Sari's mother engages in authoritative parenting. She sets limits for Sari regarding the rule for drawing and reminds her of the rule and how she has not followed it. Sari's mom also explains the reasoning behind the rule and expresses understanding and warmth when Sari says that she forgot.



Personality Factors

Personality characteristics can also affect children's development of self esteem. Children who are especially sensitive to the expectations of their caregivers may feel that they have disappointed those whose opinions matter to them, which can lead to low self esteem. These children may also be over dependent on their caregivers, making it difficult for them to experience success and learn from their mistakes. Some children can be self critical, and are disappointed by their own actions. This relates to the need to be perfect all of the time and children who feel this way end up disappointing and blaming themselves when situations do not turn out as they had hoped. This pattern can continue to occur and may damage a child's sense of self esteem.

When Self Esteem is a Serious Problem

Low self esteem is not a problem in infancy, but it can become a serious concern during the preschool period and on occasion during the toddler period. Developing high self esteem starts in infancy and is ongoing. What children think and believe about themselves can have lasting effects on their development. It is important to keep track of problems with self esteem in children since research has found a relationship between low self esteem and mental health issues, low academic achievement, delinquency, and **depression** in early and middle childhood.

Children with low self esteem can display a variety of difficult behaviours. They may have trouble interacting with their peers or have few or no peers. They may also become easily frustrated and misbehave, using tantrums to draw attention. Some may even become aggressive and express themselves through bullying behaviours.

Children with low self esteem may demonstrate depressive symptoms. Any serious self esteem problems should receive the help and guidance of a health care professional when they occur in:

- Duration (more than a 2 week period);
- Intensity (well above normal occurrences of having a low self esteem and energy typical of the same aged child);
- Multiple environments (such as the home, child care centre, and/or school environment).

Depression in childhood is described as feelings of sadness, hopelessness and helplessness. Some depressive symptoms can be situational and occur as an adjustment reaction to unexpected events such as the loss of a loved one, coping with parents' separation, or a move to a new neighbourhood. Situational depressive symptoms may be overcome in time or may require special attention. Other depressive symptoms may be chronic and related to lower self esteem and feelings of self worth.

Behaviours Related to Feelings of Depression

Behaviours	Examples
Mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feels sad.• Appears irritated, frustrated.• Overall depressed mood.
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low.• Below normal functioning.
Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low interest and pleasure in activities and with others.
Self Worth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thoughts of worthlessness.• Feels guilty.• Feels hopeless.
Sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sleep patterns disturbed (i.e., too much or not enough sleep).
Eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eating too much.• Eating too little (can also involve failure to gain weight).

Strategies and Activities

The following information contains strategies and activities to help infants, toddlers and preschoolers develop positive self esteem. Some of the following strategies and activities can be used with infants, toddlers and preschoolers, while others are specific to one age group. All of the strategies and activities can be modified to suit the child's and the setting's needs.

Strategies and Activities for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

1. Regular health and developmental check ups.
 - Sometimes children may have health problems that cause them to feel a low self esteem. For this reason, children must regularly see a health care professional such as a doctor or nurse.
2. Help caregivers to understand their child's temperament/personality.
 - Educate caregivers about temperament/personality differences.
 - Ask questions about their child's personality, including a discussion of their:
 - a. Routines.
 - b. Levels of crying.
 - c. Moods.
 - d. Activity levels.
 - e. Reactions to change.
 - f. Levels of frustration.
 - Help caregivers to create routines in the home and other care environments to accommodate the child's needs.
3. Give unconditional love.
 - Demonstrate physical affection. Give children appropriate hugs and kisses.
 - Demonstrate verbal affection. Give children verbal affirmations that praise them for who they are.
 - Children grow in their self esteem when they know that they are loved and accepted unconditionally. They also feel connected and part of a special bond with others.
4. Create a safe and secure environment.
 - Provide an environment that is physically safe for children to explore.
 - Provide clear and realistic rules so that children feel that their environment is stable and that they can trust their caregivers.

5. Spend time with children.

- Experience a variety of activities with them.
- Be involved and interested in activities to do with the child.
- Let the child take the lead in these activities.
- This will help him/her feel a sense of accomplishment and control over the activity, giving him/her a sense of empowerment.

6. Help children discover their unique talents.

- Let children experience a variety of activities so that they can discover their unique talents.
- Activities can include arts and crafts, group games, sports and music. Children can also discover unique talents through taking responsibility for routines like every day chores.
- This helps children value their strengths.
- Express faith and confidence in children's talents and uniqueness.
- Make sure children know that you value their strengths.

7. Be a role model for self esteem.

- Convey positive self esteem to children. This includes demonstrating:
 - ◇ Positive thinking.
 - ◇ Respect for self and others.
 - ◇ Encouragement, not criticism.
 - ◇ Being able to ask for help when it is needed.
- Avoid labelling the child. Instead, help them to label their feelings.
- Choose quality care where children will be in the presence of positive role models to encourage healthy self esteem.
- Children also learn from their interactions with their caregivers. If caregivers convey a high self esteem, children will learn that having high self esteem is a positive quality to have.

8. Follow the ABC's when observing behaviours.

- The ABC's (antecedents, behaviours, consequences) is based on a behavioural model of observing and understanding behaviours. When trying to understand a child's low self esteem, try using the following to understand their behaviours better.

A. Antecedents

What are the events that happened before the low self esteem behaviour occurred?

- Who was involved?
- Where did it happen?
- When did it happen?

B. Behaviours

What did the child do or not do in the situation?

- Describe all of the behaviours that occurred (i.e., verbal and physical actions) with the child and anyone else involved.

C. Consequences

What occurred after the behaviour?

- What type of intervention was used?
- How did the caregivers/peers respond?
- How did the situation end?

Did the behaviour continue, gain intensity, or stop?

- How did the child respond?

9. Support caregivers with children who experience low self esteem.

- Ask the caregivers about their own developmental history. Sometimes earlier experiences of caregivers may affect the care they provide for their children.
- If a caregiver experiences a stressful situation, a referral to an agency or support group may help.
- Encourage caregivers to support one another by sharing experiences and discussing different techniques and strategies.

Infant Strategies and Activities

1. Respond to the infant's needs right away.

- Infants benefit from a routine where they feel that their needs are being met consistently.
- Caregivers should understand that their infant learns to trust when their needs are met as soon as he/she communicates them.
- The development of trust helps infants build their self esteem.
- Common routines such as feeding and changing diapers let the infant know they are being attended to and valued. Regular play times also convey warmth, appreciation and happiness to infants.

2. Encourage eye contact.

- Bring the baby's face close and gaze into each other's eyes.
- This gazing shows the infant that someone is attentive to them and conveying love toward him/her.
- If the infant looks away, do not force the face-to-face interaction. Take the baby's cue and let the infant rest until he/she is ready.

3. Encourage the use of touch.

- Appropriate touch is important. Most babies enjoy gentle hugs, kisses, caresses, baby massages, and games.
- Take the child's lead. Some infants like to be carried and held more than others.

4. Talk to the infant.

- Involving them in daily activities (e.g., talking while preparing a meal) helps them to feel a part of home life.
- As infants get older and make more sounds, repeating their sounds back to him/her increases their social communication.
- Language development is crucial to healthy child development and building high self esteem.

Toddler and Preschool Strategies and Activities

1. Encourage confidence among children.

- Encourage children's accomplishments and attempts.
- Teach them to work toward a goal.
- Teach them to feel pride in their successes.
- Always encourage the identity of the child when they succeed and not the accomplishment only. Try using phrases such as, "You have a real talent," and, "That was a really great try," to encourage them to persevere and to try new things.
- Respect their thoughts and feelings with each experience, conveying to them that they are special.
- Use a book as a reference point for building positive attitudes.
- Reading with a child and pointing out the positive and negative attitudes in the book help children build on their own strengths through identifying with the characters (e.g., "The girl in the story feels very good about herself, even though she didn't win the race. She has a great attitude.").

2. Encourage children to take healthy risks.

- Encourage children to try new tasks.
- Help them initially while letting them take the lead and eventually over time they will manage on their own, building their self esteem.
- Help children find challenging activities to participate in. These activities can involve physical activities (e.g., running, biking, jumping rope), social activities (e.g., fantasy play, group work), and cognitive activities (e.g., puzzles, crafts).
- They may not always meet success when they take risks, but there is still an opportunity to be successful that makes the risk worthwhile.
- Making mistakes can teach valuable rules to children, such as patience.
- Encourage them to enjoy trying to master and accomplish something.
- This will also give them a feeling of responsibility.

3. Actively listen to children.

- Make sure there are no distractions while the child talks.
- Use verbal cues (such as, "I see.") and non verbal cues (e.g., look directly into the child's eyes as he/she speaks) during the listening period.
- Do not try and solve the situation right away; only listen.
- Validate the child's feelings.

- Through validation children learn that how they are feeling is acceptable.
 - Help them to label their feelings if they have trouble communicating.
4. Build trust in children.
 - Give them rules and realistic expectations for their behaviours.
 - Teach them that actions have consequences and be consistent with following up on these consequences.
 - Children learn that there are rules to accept and that they also have the choice to make changes to their behaviours when they do not follow these rules.
 - Treat children fairly.
 - Give children responsibility by letting them have a say regarding some of the decision making.
 5. Give children choices.
 - To prevent the child from feeling overwhelmed, limit their number of choices to 2 or 3.
 - Having choices creates responsibilities, providing the choices are age appropriate.
 - Children learn confidence and trust when they are given choices to make and learn responsibility from making choices.
 6. Expand and strengthen children's talents and uniqueness.
 - Acknowledge when children have done a good job.
 - Encourage them to try the next step after one accomplishment.
 - Concentrate on improvements and not on creating perfection.
 7. Promote social interactions.
 - Encourage children to play with others. Natural bonds can form between children through cooperative play.
 - If there is a community centre nearby that has child play sessions, consider having the child attend these sessions to encourage them to interact and make new friends. Having friends is a big booster for self esteem.

SUMMING IT UP

- ↑ Infants are not born with self esteem. It is through early emotional bonds that babies begin to engage with others and develop socially. Through experience, infants develop memories that are tied to emotions, and learn that they can create change in their environment. They also are able to self regulate, which impacts on their levels of self awareness and allows them to share their emotions with others.
- ↑ Toddlers are curious and self aware. As they learn more about themselves, they also begin to develop positive or negative views of themselves. Toddlers with a positive view of self are likely to have positive self esteem as they are more competent in social situations and are accepted by their peers. Toddlers also learn about rules and limits to their behaviours, which also helps them feel confident in their surroundings and instills trust within their caregivers.
- ↑ Preschoolers have grown more self reliant and have developed more sophisticated motor, cognitive and language skills. These skills relate to their development of self esteem. Despite these growing skills, preschoolers may still have over dependence issues with their caregivers, which can interfere with a healthy level of self esteem.

GLOSSARY

Authoritarian parenting:	Caregiving style placing multiple demands on child, does not take into account child's view point, and lacks warm interactions with child.
Authoritative parenting:	Caregiving style where caregivers establish limits, explain the reasoning behind the limits to the child, and experience warm and affectionate interactions with child.
Competent:	Feeling capable of accomplishing a task.
Depression:	A disorder defined by continuous feelings of sadness, hopelessness and helplessness. Some depressive symptoms can be situational or temporary while others can be chronic and long lasting.
Motor skills:	Movement abilities involving large and small muscles.
Negative view of self:	A feeling towards one's self that involves feelings of embarrassment, shame, and incompetence.
Permissive parenting:	Caregiving style where there is disorganized, inconsistent care, and few demands are placed on the child.
Positive view of self:	A feeling toward one's self including feelings of accomplishment, competence, and strength to explore and learn.
Self efficacy:	Feelings of capability towards reaching a goal or accomplishing a task.
Self esteem:	One's self concept; an individual's perception or point of view about him/her self.
Self regulate:	Through social interactions, children learn how to control their emotions based on the reactions and emotional expressions of others.