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Self-esteem in children

Saadia Zakia Talib

Self-esteem has been studied for more than 100 years; specialists and educators continue to debate its precise nature and development. Nevertheless, they generally agree that parents and other adults who are important to children play a major role in laying a solid foundation for a child's development.

What Is Self-Esteem?

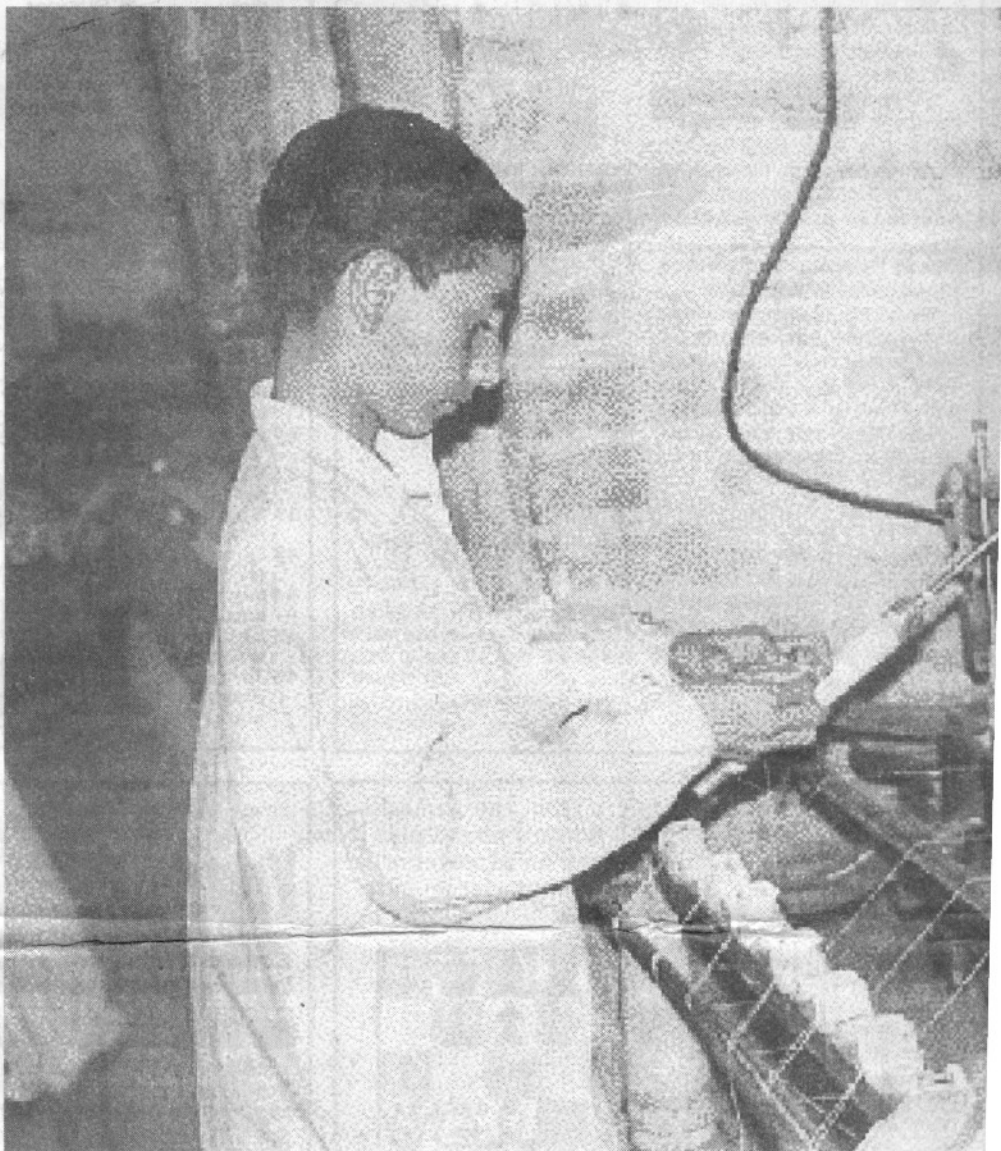
Self-esteem is a good opinion, self-importance, and conception of oneself. Self-esteem can express also in these words "how we see ourselves", "How we feel ourselves" "how much we value ourselves", "how we assert ourselves" and how we adjusted ourselves."

"When parents and teachers of young children talk about the need for good self-esteem, they usually mean that children should have "good feelings" about themselves. With young children, self-esteem refers to the extent to which they expect to be accepted and valued by the adults and peers who are important to them." (Lilian Katz)

For your children: listen, accept, discipline, and set limits for self-esteem. Use the language of self-esteem and allow independent decisions for a positive child with positive self-esteem. Kids need acceptance to develop positive esteem.

Children with a healthy sense of self-esteem feel that the important adults in their lives accept them, care about them, and would go out of their way to ensure that they are safe and well. They feel that those adults would be upset if anything happened to them and would miss them if they were separated. Children with low self-esteem, on the other hand, feel that the important adults and peers in their lives do not accept them, do not care about them very much, and would not go out of their way to ensure their safety and well-being.

During their early years, young children's self-esteem is based largely on their perceptions of how the important adults in their lives judge them.



"When parents and teachers of young children talk about the need for good self-esteem, they usually mean that children should have "good feelings" about themselves. With young children, self-esteem refers to the extent to which they

children's feelings of belonging to a group and being able to adequately function in their group. When toddlers become preschoolers, for example, they are expected to control their impulses and adopt the rules of the family and community in which they are growing. Successfully adjusting to these groups helps to strengthen feelings of belonging to them.

One point to make is that young children are unlikely to have their self-esteem strengthened from excessive praise or flattery. On the contrary, it may raise some doubts in children; many children can see through flattery and may even dismiss an adult who heaps on praise as a poor source of support—one who is not very believable.

peers all depends on self-confidence. Without it, children's talents may not be developed as they may be afraid to take risks or be creative. Research shows that a positive self-concept is more important to academic success than a high IQ score. Children will have greater self-esteem if they feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for their experiences. The following are guidelines to follow for fostering self-esteem.

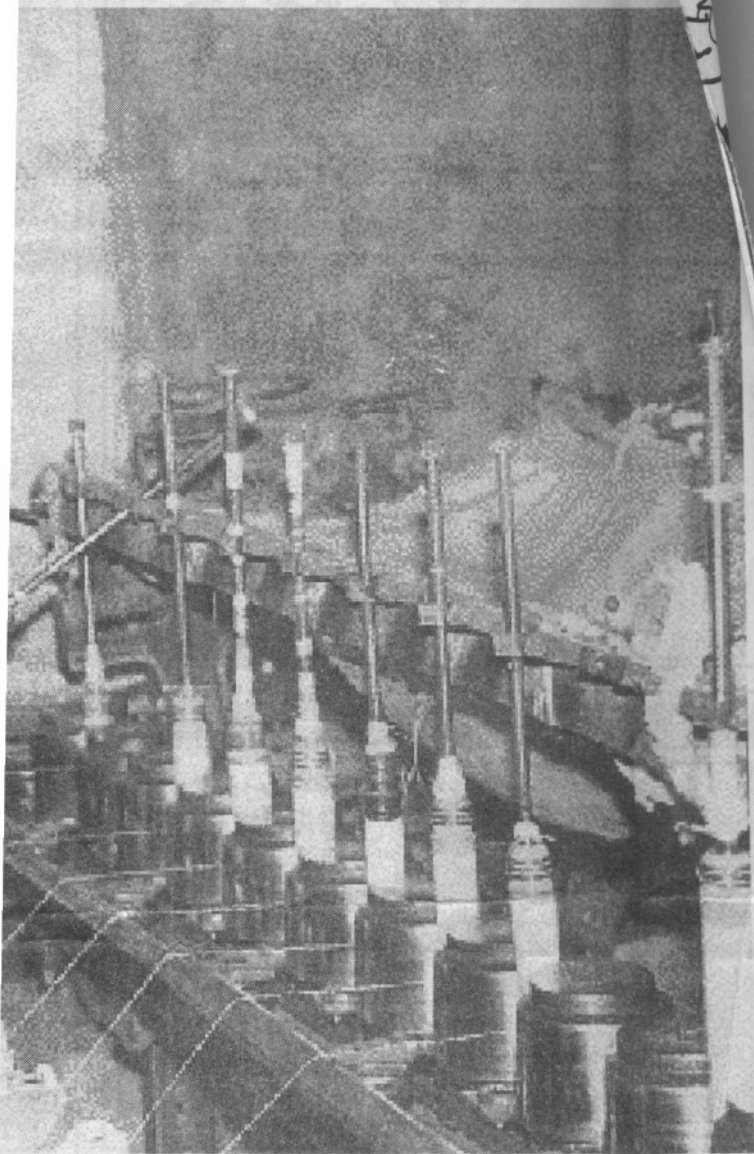
- Look at each child as unique person
- Make every effort not to compare a child with sibling or classmates. Focus on the countless assets rather than what the child does not have. De-emphasize competition. Accept the child for what he or

ure is unlikely by breaking down tasks into a series of easy steps and communicating them clearly and concisely. Provide opportunity for training. Give children a chance to contribute in their particular area of com-

goals.

- Give your child responsibility and chores at his/her at home, and don't forget to praise them and to compliment them on a job well done.

- Let him/her know



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- Give encouragement

Recognize efforts and improvements rather than waiting to praise completed tasks. Focus on children's assets and strengths and encourage self-appreciation and positive self-talk.

- Accept children's unpleasant feelings and teach them how to deal with them

Emotions, and feelings seriously. give feedback that makes a clear distinction between the behavior and the person.

- Give choices

Children will not develop a

your are proud of him/her and say so.

- Let him/her be the "family expert" on subjects that interest him/her.

- As much as possible, provide a range of different enriching experiences for him/her. These don't have to be expensive - a simple nature walk can be a great experience for you and your child.

- Tell friends and relatives about your child's achievements and positive qualities, and let your child overhear.

- Make time for your child in your busy days and give

them very much, and would not go out of their way to ensure their safety and well-being.

During their early years, young children's self-esteem is based largely on their perceptions of how the important adults in their lives judge them. The extent to which children believe they have the characteristics valued by the important adults and peers in their lives figures greatly in their development of self-esteem. For example, in families and communities that value athletic ability highly, children who excel in athletics are likely to have a high level of self-esteem, whereas children who are less athletic or who are criticized as being physically input or clumsy are likely to suffer from low self-esteem.

Families, communities, and ethnic and cultural groups vary in the criteria on which self-esteem is based. For example, some groups may emphasize physical appearance, and some may evaluate boys and girls differently. Stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination are also factors that may contribute to low self-esteem among children.

Develop a healthy

young children about themselves. With young children, self-esteem refers to the extent to which they expect to be accepted and valued by the adults and peers who are important to them." (Lilian Katz)

Sense of self-esteem

The foundations of self-esteem are laid early in life when infants develop attachments with the adults who are responsible for them. When adults readily respond to their cries and smiles, babies learn to feel loved and valued. Children come to feel loved and accepted by being loved and accepted by people they look up to. As young children learn to trust their parents and other who care for them to satisfy their basic needs, they gradually feel wanted, valued, and loved.

Self-esteem is also related to

ened from excessive praise or flattery. On the contrary, it may raise some doubts in children; many children can see through flattery and may even dismiss an adult who heaps on praise as a poor source of support—one who is not very believable.

Self-esteem and confidence

Self-esteem and confidence are very important factors in children's progress at school. A child who is generally confident and who has high self-esteem is more likely to ask questions, participate actively, express his/her ideas, and take on new challenges. He/she is also better able to learn from mistakes, handle constructive criticism and to generally push themselves harder in learning. Conversely when a child's self-esteem is low he/she is more likely to be negative, withdraw and experience failure more often.

Building children's self-esteem

How can parents and teachers help be sure that children will be responsible for their education, free-time and overall well being? Success in school, getting along in a family or with

• Look at each child as a unique person

• Make every effort not to compare a child with siblings or classmates. Focus on the countless assets rather than what the child does not have. De-emphasize competition. Accept the child for what he or she is rather than what you want him or her to be. Be supportive of his or her interests.

• Keep expectations realistic

Be in line with the basic facts of child development. Fit expectations with children's ages, temperaments, and backgrounds. Be careful not to base your expectations on your unfulfilled wishes and values rather than the children's wants and needs. Avoid using children to increase your status. Help children to set realistic goals for themselves.

• Give the freedom to make mistakes

Help children develop the courage to be imperfect. Don't be defeated by mistakes. Learn from the experience. Teach children problem solving skills so they can continue to try. Instead of focusing on errors, encourage children.

• Build in success

Create situations where fail-

Children will not develop a sense of ownership and responsibility if other people always decide what they will do and when and how they will do it. Real choices, appropriate to children's ages, do permit them to experiment, make mistakes, and learn in non-threatening situations.

- Give responsibility and expect cooperation

Give children opportunities to help with tasks around the house. Take care to never, on a regular basis, do for your children what they can do for themselves.

- Keep your sense of humor

Encourage children to see the humorous side of events. Be careful not to appear to be laughing at them (Jan Gordon).

By being aware of your child's self-esteem and confidence level, you, as a parent, can act as a coach for your child. All of us do better when there is someone actively coaching us to be the best that we can be. Your child will too.

Further suggestions

- Help your child to set realistic goals and then support him/her in achieving those

in your busy days with him/her the gift of your undivided attention, if seen just for a few minutes per day.

- Set clear boundaries and expectations for your child. This provides a sense of security and lets him/her know that you care enough to be consistent and clear.

- Leave encouraging notes or letters for your child.

Try not to

- Put your child down verbally. Discourage the problem, not the child.

- Let your child put himself/herself down verbally; instead encourage and model positive self-talk.

- Compare him/her to his/her siblings or friends.

- Over-protect.

Be negative yourself or convey helplessness to your child.

Conclusion

Parents can play an important role in strengthening children's self-esteem by treating them respectfully, taking their views and opinions seriously, and expressing appreciation to them. Above all, parents must keep in mind that self-esteem is an important part of every child's development.