

ABC's of Self Esteem

Your home can be a nurturing place for your child's self-esteem. Children in a single parent family can thrive and feel good about themselves when you know the ABCs of building their self esteem. These ABC's are easy to remember, and you can excel in this important skill of parenting. Self-esteem grows in a child's life when the parent recognizes what the child has done.

- **Acceptance.** Kids are different. Treat them differently.
- **Belonging.** Kids feel like they belong when they give back to their family.
- **Competence.** When your child finishes a project, hug him and say **"Good job!"**

Acceptance means realizing that each child is unique and different from brothers and sisters. Kids may rebel when they are not allowed the same privileges as their older siblings. Children also are motivated differently. Children need to feel like they belong in their families. Children can gain this feeling of belonging by giving back to the family. They can mow the lawn, wash the dishes, clean their bedrooms, take out the garbage, do their homework before watching TV, and save their money so they can buy things for themselves. Another way children gain positive self-esteem is by feeling competent. Think of what your child does well and then affirm them in their actions. Children can thrive in a single parent home when they develop positive self-esteem.

Good Choices

Parents who dominate or feel compelled to control everything in their children's lives can rob kids of opportunities to make good choices. Because good choices are key to positive self-esteem, here are some activities you can turn into opportunities for your kids.

Activity or Event	How to Give My Child a Choice
Breakfast	Would you like to have cereal, pancakes, or french toast for breakfast?
Getting dressed for school	Do you want to wear the navy shirt or the t-shirt with green stripes?
Cleaning the bedroom	Do you want to clean your room now or after watching your favorite tv show?
Doing homework	Do you want to do homework now or after supper?
Watching television	Do you want to spend 90 minutes of tv watching baseball or a movie?

Getting out of "No Time/No Money Trap"

Single parents can struggle finding time to spend with their kids. Between jobs and housework, there is little opportunity for quality time. Some single parents overspend on toys and gifts in hopes of compensating for lack of quality time with their kids. As a result, singleparents may find that they have no time and no money for their families. If you think you are guilty of trying to buy your children happiness, review the following suggested actions.

1. Eliminate one or more activities in your life that are robbing you of time with your kids.
2. Give the kids responsibility for some of the chores at home (e.g. washing clothes, mowing lawn).
3. Develop a realistic budget for the family that includes a savings account for emergencies.
4. Schedule "Family Time" on the calendar every week and protect the time with the kids.