

PARENTING FOR SELF-ESTEEM

Being a parent is the most difficult job in the world. Good parenting is always a creative effort taking account of your personality and your child's personality. The following are guidelines and goals to keep in mind:

LISTEN

Listening to your child is the first step in responding to his/her needs. It is amazing how reassuring it is to children to know that someone really understands their point of view.

APPRECIATE

Notice what is most wonderful and special about your child. Appreciate also how hard some things are for him/her and that sometimes it is an accomplishment just to make it through.

PRAISE

Keep track and make sure that you are offering more praise than criticism. Praise should be genuine, evolving out of your appreciation of your child's qualities and accomplishments.

HUG

Physical affection is always important and may be a simple way to show you care when things get complicated. If your child is a non-cuddly, keep-your-distance kind of person, a little pat on the back may be more welcome than a big hug.

DISCIPLINE

Even if all is going well, some limit setting is necessary, as children feel insecure without limits. Research shows that an authoritative discipline style is best for a child's self-esteem. Be firm and consistent, but do provide reasons for your rules and take your child's needs and wishes into account.

Finally, don't be too hard on yourself. Remember that these are goals to work toward. Expecting perfection of yourself is no more helpful than expecting perfection from your children. But if you really are stuck, it may be time to ask for help.