

# Build him up – raising a resilient child

**We all want our children to be happy and healthy. Boosting their self-esteem and teaching them to manage their emotions can help enhance their mental well-being**



**A** happy, healthy child can concentrate well in school and cope with challenges positively. He will also have higher immunity levels and fall sick less frequently.

A child with positive self-esteem

- is confident of his own abilities.
- sees setbacks as temporary.
- learns from mistakes.
- is optimistic.
- engages in positive coping strategies.
- manages emotions effectively.

## Build your child's self-esteem

Here are some ideas on how you can help your child build positive self-esteem as well as manage his stress and anger.

### How to!

#### Help your child build positive self-esteem

**1. Find strengths.** Encourage him to try different activities to find out what he is good at. Explain that different people excel at different things and he should be proud of what he has achieved.

**2. Praise generously.** Always praise your child's efforts whenever he performs a task well, no matter how small it is. This helps to reinforce the positive behaviour, increase his motivation and build self-esteem.

**3. Spend time together.** Put aside some time for your child and make him feel that he is important to you. Give your child full



attention when playing with or listening to him.

**4. Manage expectations.** Every child progresses at a different rate. Do not compare your child with other children. Praise his efforts for trying so that he feels motivated to work harder next time and explore ways on how he can improve his performance.

**5. Encourage independence.** Give your child manageable tasks to complete by himself. Support and guide him through any problems and praise him when he completes the task. Encourage him when he faces difficulties.

#### 6. Build friendships.

Give your child opportunities to socialise. Take him to the playground and introduce him to the kids in the neighbourhood. Let him invite his friends home to play.



**7. Avoid labels.** Do not use negative words like "lazy", "naughty" or "stupid". Explain to your child that it is the action that you do not like. Help him realise that the problem is not him, but the behaviour.

## Teaching kids how to handle stress

Stress can affect a child's physical, emotional, social and intellectual well-being. Help your child face his problems by teaching him the necessary skills to deal with them.

Is your child stressed? Look out for sudden changes in his emotions, behaviour, thoughts and routines:

- He is usually happy but suddenly becomes sad.
- He has always enjoyed going to school, but now hates it.

### How to!

#### Help your child cope with stress

**1. Sleep well.** Make sure your child gets enough sleep every night. Maintain a regular bedtime and wake-time.

**2. Relax.** Let your child do things that he enjoys, be it playing outdoors with friends or listening to music, so as to enhance his mood and to relax himself.

**3. Model positivity.** Children learn by watching their parents. Show him that stress is normal and can be handled effectively and healthily, for example, going for a jog helps to relax and reduce stress.

**4. Teach him how to handle criticism.**

Whether it is teasing from friends or comments from teachers and other parents, let your child know that no one is perfect and that we can learn from every experience.



**5. Develop a routine.** Children need predictability and routines. Let your child know what to expect. This gives him a sense of control so that he feels less helpless and stressed.

**6. Teach problem-solving skills.** Sit with your child and teach him how to identify a problem, come up with possible solutions, and brainstorm for the best. Eventually, he will learn to do this on his own.

**7. Speak to a trusted adult.** Encourage your child to speak to a trusted adult at different settings whenever he faces problems so that he does not bottle things up. Help him identify the people whom he can talk to (such as his teacher or school counsellor) and practise ways of asking for help.

### Managing anger – for kids

Anger is a normal emotion, and one that even some adults have problems managing. Children are quick to flare up, but most get over the heat of the moment quickly. Some, however, may not be able to control their feelings as well as others.

#### How to!

##### Teach your child to deal with anger

**1. Identify triggers.** Ask your child what or who made him angry and why. Help him express his feelings. This will enable him to

understand that it is the behaviour and not the person that has upset him. Discuss how to resolve the conflict constructively.

**2. Positive affirmation.** Teach him to think positively. Your child can learn to tell himself: “Relax! I don’t need to get angry about it”, “I am not going to let him bug me” and “I am okay”.

**3. Relaxation helps.** Teach your child breathing techniques to calm himself down. Engage in physical activities, such as jogging, to release tension. If your child prefers, he can draw or write to let his feelings out.



**4. Speak to a trusted adult.** Encourage your child to talk to someone if he cannot resolve a conflict and continues to be in anger. Tell him that talking to someone helps him feel better and allows him to find more ways to solve the problem.

### Building parent-child relationships

Spending quality time with your child is one of the best ways to build a strong and happy parent-child relationship. Always make it a point to allocate time for your child, no matter how busy you are.

#### How to!

#### Establish a positive parent-child relationship

- Make it a point to set aside time for your child. Stick to it.

- Find out more about your child's likes and dislikes, such as his favourite toys, cartoon characters, school friends, and so on.
- Give your child your undivided attention when talking to him.
- Connect with your child during playtime, for instance, you can ride a bicycle with your child.
- Make time for your child to show your love and appreciation.

“Connect with your child during playtime, for instance, you can ride a bicycle with your child.”




**Parent-Child Activities**

# Get active!

**Try these parent-child activities that will help foster stronger and happier relationships. You can find these – and more – at HPB Online<sup>1</sup>**

## Decision time

Let your child participate in making a decision, such as which story to read, what outfit to wear or where to go during the weekend. Start with two options at a time because very young children may get confused when there are too many choices.

### What this achieves

Your child learns to be independent and will enjoy the time spent together more when engaged in decision-making.

## Let us all move it, move it

Regular physical activity is a good way to help your child relieve stress and stay healthy. If he experiences a particularly stressful day, you can consider taking him for a jog, cycling in the park, or go for some active play at the playground to relieve your child's stress.

## Kitchen helper

Get your child to join in the fun when you are baking or cooking simple meals. Contributing in small ways such as kneading the dough or pouring the mixture will be a fun-filled activity for your child.

### What this achieves

This builds your child's confidence as he learns to make something by himself. Your little one will feel proud in contributing to something that both of you can share.

## Make books come alive

Read to your child. Make it an interactive session by encouraging your young one to point out different things such as letters, shapes or colours.

### What this achieves

By getting your child to participate, it will make learning more enjoyable. Soon, your child will begin to look forward to such sessions together.



<sup>1</sup> Ways to build a happy and lasting relationship with your child. <http://www.hpb.gov.sg/pregnancyparenting/article.aspx?id=3008>.