**Promoting self-esteem in children**

Self-esteem is how we feel about our abilities and strengths, including our ability to overcome challenges. Use these tips to help your child maintain their self-esteem through the difficulties of a medical illness.

**SUPPORT YOUR CHILD IN BUILDING AN IDENTITY**

Your child can build their self-esteem and confidence by trying out new activities, developing new skills and overcoming challenges.

**Help your child by:**

- helping them set goals (not too easy and not too hard) that match their strengths and abilities
- reminding them that it is normal to struggle at times
- teaching them that persevering when things are tough will help them
  - develop new skills
  - deal with challenges in the future
- encouraging them to try a variety of appropriate activities of their choice
- giving them a say in some minor decisions about their medical care, if appropriate

**PRAISE YOUR CHILD’S EFFORT AND GROWTH**

Help your child maintain their self-esteem by showing your child that you love them regardless of their struggles.

**Give effective praise by:**

- focusing on your child’s efforts rather than their personal traits
- giving praise that is well deserved
- making sure your praise is sincere and meaningful

Did you know? This is one of a several tip sheets on handling illness during childhood. Visit [www.aboutkidshealth.ca/PREVNet](http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/PREVNet) to find tips on easing transitions through medically-related absences from school and other related topics.
Promoting self-esteem in children

MODEL GOOD COPING SKILLS

Parents are important role models. Your child observes what you do and learns from it.

Help your child develop good coping skills by:

- showing that you persist and stay positive in the face of your own setbacks
- taking time for yourself or seeking help from a mental health-care professional, if needed

PROMOTE HEALTHY FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Healthy relationships in the family help build a child’s self-esteem.

Maintain healthy relationships by:

- treating each of your children as fairly as possible
- being sensitive to the limits imposed by your child’s illness
- spending one-on-one time with each of your children
- making time for enjoyable family activities

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