



## MONTHLY PARENTING TIP FROM THE ACFC

August, 2009



### Effective Parenting for Courage and Self-Esteem

Courage-the confidence to take a known risk for a known purpose.

What does this mean to you as a parent and the importance of developing courage in your children? Courage is a feeling of confidence that motivates us to take risks, knowing that we have a chance to succeed, and that even if we fail, the risk was worth taking. Courage comes from a belief in ourselves that we are lovable, capable human beings who will eventually succeed. And even if we fail, we are still lovable, capable human beings. This belief in ourselves is called "self-esteem." When children think well of themselves -have high self-esteem-, when they believe they have a good chance to succeed, then they will have the courage to take risks. Without this feeling of courage, they will find themselves sitting on the sidelines, unwilling to take the risks needed to complete any endeavor. Without courage, they will let life pass by while wishfully waiting for someone else to lead the way. Without courage, they are more likely to be influenced by negative factors they encounter. Low self-esteem leads to discouragement, and children are afraid of taking risks, or make unwise ones because they don't value themselves, or they're afraid of losing approval from family or friends.

What can parents do to encourage their children and develop the courage they need to be successful? They can:

- Help limit negative influences and encourage positive ones.
- Avoid focusing on mistakes, expecting too little or too much, and overprotecting and pampering.
- Encourage positive values and rational beliefs.
- Encourage them to identify and accept their feelings. Teach them to listen to the message behind their feelings.
- Encourage positive behavior by building on strengths, showing confidence, valuing the child, and stimulating independence.

A great way to express this encouragement to your children is by writing them a Letter of Encouragement. In your letter write about improvement, not necessarily accomplishment, write only truthful comments, be specific about what the improvements are, and say how your child's behavior has been helpful to others. Most importantly, let them know that you love them for who and what they are.

Remember, courage is needed to resist peer pressure. Kids with high self-esteem are more likely to realize they are too important to hurt themselves or others. Self-esteem and courage allow kids to take a stand for what they know is right. You, as parents, can help your children grow the confidence and self-esteem they need to survive and thrive.

Learn more about the traits for success and other ways to develop courage, responsibility and character in your children by joining an Active Parenting Online Group. This six-week, video-based interactive class is being offered free to CWA represented employees in DE, MD, PA, NJ, VA, WV, Washington, DC or can be purchased at a discounted rate for non-CWA represented employees.

Visit [www.ACFCcares.com](http://www.ACFCcares.com) for more information and to register for the next available class.