



The Skill of Encouragement

During the pandemic children have struggled with the change in their schedules and social interactions. Much of the encouragement they are used to receiving from friends and teachers is missing. This is an especially important time for parents to encourage their children and show support for them. They need to know that regardless of any particular outcome, they are lovable, capable people who have a good chance to succeed. And when they don't succeed, they look inward for a belief that they are much more than just their achievements—that there is something worthwhile and special about them just because they are who they are. This belief—their high self-esteem—helps motivate them to continue to work hard for good grades even after they have received a low one. It gives them the confidence to say “no” to their friends when they are pressured to use alcohol or drugs, or engage in other destructive behavior. When self-esteem is high—when we think we have a reasonable chance to succeed, and we know that all is not lost if we don't—we have the confidence to tackle life's challenges. We have courage. Here are some tips you can use to encourage your children.

FREE LIFE-CHANGING ONLINE PARENTING COURSES

In these video-based, interactive classes—available 24/7—you'll learn a consistent, encouraging style of parenting that will benefit you and your children for a lifetime. With this self-study course, you have the option of when to participate based on your own schedule and at your convenience. Gain additional insight from your online group leaders as they provide support and feedback.

Choose from four available courses:

- **Active Parenting: First Five Years:** For parents of children from birth to age 5
- **Active Parenting 4th ED:** For parents of children ages 5 to 12
- **Active Parenting of Teens:** For parents of preteens and teens
- **Crossroads of Parenting & Divorce:** For divorced and divorcing parents

Continue your experience as an “active” parent by reviewing what you learn in the class in your accompanying parent guide. Each guide contains additional information, activities, and worksheets to help you practice what you learn.

Visit [ACFCcares.com](https://www.acfccares.com) for more information and to start your Active Parenting journey today.

Show Confidence

Children develop self-esteem and courage by developing skills and learning how to handle problems. But to do this, they need self-esteem and courage. You can cut into this “chicken and egg” situation by giving your children responsibility, asking their opinion or advice and avoiding unnecessary rescues.

Give Responsibility

Giving your children responsibility is a nonverbal way of showing confidence. It says, “I know you can do this.” Of course, be careful to give responsibilities that are in line with the children's age and level of ability, or you could be setting the stage for failure.

Ask your children's opinion or advice

The adolescent years are filled with rapid intellectual growth. You can help encourage this development, as well as the self-esteem and courage that can go with it, by asking your children's opinion or advice. You can even ask them to teach you something. For example: *“I'm having trouble sending messages on this new phone. Would you show me how to do it?”*

Value Your Child As-Is

Your child's self-esteem does not come from their achievements alone. Their courage and self-respect also relies upon feeling accepted by significant people. In fact, this is often what everyone wants most: to be accepted for who they really are, not just for what they've accomplished. Your child needs to know that win or lose, pass or fail, in trouble or out of trouble, you are still their parent, and *you are glad of it*. Everyone needs this unconditional love from someone.

Separate the deed from the doer

Parents can help children value themselves by separating who they are from what they do. When your child misbehaves, focus your attention on the behavior, not the child. Focus on the deed, not the doer. Let them know you disapprove of what they did, not who they are.

Practice these steps with your children and you'll see the difference it can make in their self-esteem and confidence.

To learn more about effective parenting skills, visit the Active Parenting Online Video Library. These helpful videos are offered free of charge by the ACFC in partnership with Active Parenting. Guidance and help are available for parents of children of all ages. To access the Online Video Library, go to the **[ACFC website](https://www.acfccares.com)**, click on the Active Parenting tab, and follow the instructions on how to view the videos.