
Working with Families to Support Children's Self-Confidence

INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with “4 Small Ways to Build Confidence in Kids,” an article from the Child Mind Institute. The questions and activities in this handout could be used in a work session (e.g., professional learning community, professional development session), for individual coaching, or for self-reflection.

Goals

- ◆ Identify strategies families can use to promote the development of self-confidence.
- ◆ Consider family perspectives when discussing ways to build self-confidence.
- ◆ Plan for positive interactions with families using language that stimulates conversations.

Activity

- ◆ Before reading the article, use the prompting questions to reflect on your current practices and beliefs about the families in your classroom.
- ◆ Read the article.
- ◆ Use the reflection questions to guide your work with families to support the development of children's self-confidence.
- ◆ Implement your plan and adjust as needed.

Confident children believe in themselves and are able to face new challenges without fear—essential factors for a happy and fulfilling life.

Liz Greene

PROMPTING QUESTIONS

Complete before reading the article.

- ◆ Think about each child and family in your class. What practices or traits do they value that might impact how they understand and promote the development of self-confidence?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Complete after reading the article.

- ◆ What caught your attention from the article? What made that fact, excerpt, or example meaningful to you?
- ◆ In this article, Liz Greene notes, “Self-confidence originates from a perception of competence.”
 - How do you define or view “competence” in young children? What does it look like?
 - How do you support self-confidence through helping children feel competent?
 - How might your views of what “competence” means be similar or different from the beliefs of the families in your classroom?
 - For example, you may put an emphasis on the ability to independently complete tasks, such as putting toys away, so you acknowledge and affirm these actions in the classroom to help a child feel more confident. However, some families may teach that it is okay to be dependent on adults and may value the time they are able to spend assisting their child.
 - How can you collaborate with families to meet the needs of the child when there are differences between your perspectives?
- ◆ Focusing on the development of a child’s self-confidence is an ongoing process. This article outlines four ways to build confidence in children:
 - Make time for play
 - Provide them with small jobs
 - Give them your attention
 - Provide encouragement often
- ◆ Create a plan to integrate these and other ideas into recurring conversations with families.
 - When and how will you bring up the topic of self-confidence with families?
 - How would you use your knowledge about family beliefs and values to guide these conversations? How could you incorporate their ideas and input?
 - Take a moment to think specifically about dual language learners or children with disabilities in your classroom. How might these conversations and supports look different?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about working with families to support children's self-confidence:

- ◆ **Source:** Illinois Early Learning Project
- ◆ **Tip Sheet:** Encouraging Words
- ◆ **Link:** <https://illinoisearlylearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/encouragingwords.pdf>
- ◆ **Description:** This tip sheet shares simple but powerful ways adults can use encouraging words to help children to develop self-confidence. Although it is written to support families, any caregiver can use the tips to recognize their efforts and encourage them to feel good about themselves.

- ◆ **Source:** Sesame Street
- ◆ **Video:** Cultivating Confidence
- ◆ **Link:** <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/resilience/?activity=cultivating-confidence-provider>
- ◆ **Description:** This video is designed to be shared with families. It defines and highlights the importance of self-confidence. It uses a short video clip about an interaction between Elmo and his dad to demonstrate some important strategies to help promote this skill.

- ◆ **Source:** Healthychildren.org
- ◆ **Video:** Teaching Children Cultural and Racial Pride
- ◆ **Link:** <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Teaching-Children-Cultural-and-Racial-Pride.aspx>
- ◆ **Description:** This video offers advice from the American Academy of Pediatrics to immigrant families. In this video, Dr. Edith Bracho-Sanchez highlights the importance of teaching children to celebrate their differences to boost racial pride and self-confidence. Consider the ideas shared in this video and think about ways you can support families to build self-confidence.