



Confidence Summary

Why Confidence?

Confidence simply means belief in self. But from where does that belief come? It begins with a trusting relationship you work to cultivate with your child/teen. That bond you have with your child/teen forms a solid foundation from which a child/teen can explore the world.

Tip These steps are done best when you and your child/teen are not tired or in a rush.

Tip Intentional communication and actively building a healthy parenting relationship will support these steps.

Step 1. Get Your Child/Teen Thinking by Getting Their **Input**

- Explore the issue by building from success and strengths! Consider together what your child/teen is working on at school.
 - *“Remember last year when you presented in front of the whole middle school? How did you feel at the start? In the middle? How did you feel when you finished and everyone applauded?”*
 - *“What helped you get through that learning challenge?”*
- If your child/teen is feeling insecure in their friendships, ask key questions first about that specific issue to really understand what’s challenging your child/teen.
 - *“I know there’s a lot going on this year with your friends. Tell me a little bit about what some of the struggles are.”*
 - *“I’ve noticed you talk about this particular friend a lot. What makes her such a good friend to you? What do you appreciate about her?”*

Step 2. **Teach** New Skills by Interactive Modeling

- Cultivate a learning mindset. For example, when your child/teen says, “This is dumb!” and you know your child/teen means, “I can’t do it!” you could respond with:
 - *“I know things can feel really frustrating when you first start.”*
 - *“I’m going to hang in there with you while you get through the challenging part.”*
 - *“You can learn anything with time, practice, and hard work.”*
 - *“You can meet or overcome any challenge with time, practice, and hard work.”*
 - *“Remember that time you did do it even when you thought you couldn’t?”*
- If your child/teen says, “The kids are horrible at school!” you can respond with:
 - *“Sometimes what your friends do feels like it doesn’t make sense. How do you wish they would behave?”*

- *"You know how to be a good friend (share specific examples). Your classmates will want to be friends with you because of the ways you are a good friend."*
- Talk with your child/teen about superheroes or people that they admire. Ask: *"What qualities do they have? What gives them the confidence to engage in any situation? What qualities do you already have?"*
- Teach your child/teen about self-talk.
 - Use reflective listening for the unspoken message such as, *"I can see that you are telling yourself you're just not good at this. Unfortunately, telling yourself you can't do it can hurt your chance of meeting your goal. How can we turn that message around to help you?"*
 - Ask and invite your child/teen to think about how to reframe that self-talk.
 - Reinforce your child's/teen's response if it's positive or provide ways to frame thinking in the positive such as, *"I know if I work hard at this, I can figure it out."*
 - Practice the new language together. Provide specific feedback when you see your child using that new language using *"I notice..."* statements.

Step 3. **Practice** to Grow Skills and Develop Habits

- Allow your child/teen the chance to take steps to meet their big challenges, taking responsibility for their own tasks or relationships -- even when you know you could do it faster and better.
- Be sure to consider how you can create the conditions to support their success.
- Talk with your child/teen about what makes them feel confident and what takes away from their confidence. Share your responses as well as the skills you use when you don't feel confident.

Step 4. **Support** Your Child's/Teen's Development and Success

- Initially, your child/teen may need active support. Use *"I'd love to see..."* or *"What do you need..."* statements. *"Before you go up in front of the class to solve a math problem on the board, what will you say to yourself to stay calm and confident?"*
- Don't move on quickly if your child/teen shows interest in trying something new. Children/teens often need more time to stick with a challenge or pursue a goal. Be sure to wait long enough for your child/teen to show you they are competent. Your waiting could make all the difference in whether they are able to gain skills over time.
- Recognize effort by using *"I notice..."* statements like, *"I noticed how you looked directly at your teacher when answering the question she asked,"* or *"I noticed you opted for a more challenging assignment. Great work!"*
- On days with extra challenges: *"I know this is a challenging space for you, and I have all the faith in the world that you will make it through."*
- Actively reflect on how your child/teen is feeling when approaching challenges: *"How are you feeling about your final assignment at school?"* or *"Seems like you got frustrated with your homework and just stopped. Did your teacher mention that your homework was incomplete?"*

Step 5. **Recognize** Effort and Quality to Foster Motivation

- Recognize and call out when it is going well. *“I notice you helped out your friend by reading the instructions together and figuring it out. Even though you weren’t completely sure of yourself, you pushed through. Yes! Excellent.”*
- Recognize small steps along the way. Find small ways your child/teen is making an effort and let them know you see them.
- Build celebrations into your routine. Include hugs, high fives, and fist bumps as ways to appreciate one another.

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