



Confidence Summary

Why Confidence?

Confidence simply means belief in self. But from where does that confidence come? It begins with a trusting relationship you work to cultivate with your child. The bond you have with your child forms a solid foundation from which your child can explore the world. There are intentional ways to grow a healthy parent-child relationship while building a sense of confidence in your child that they can work toward their goals and succeed in school and life.

Tip These steps are done best when you and your child 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 Thinking by Getting Their **Input**

- Build on a past success.
 - *“Remember last year when you had to write your first essay? How did you feel at the start? In the middle? How did you feel when you finished and the teacher liked it?”*
 - *“What helped you get through that learning challenge?”*
- Focus on challenging areas.
 - *“How can you start up a conversation with a classmate?”*
 - *“What does a good friend act like, say, or do?”*
 - *“How can you act in ways that will be a good friend to others?”*

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

- Cultivate a learning mindset. For example, when your child says, *“I can’t do it!”* respond with:
 - *“You can learn anything with time, practice, and hard work.”*
 - *“Remember that time you did do it even when you thought you couldn’t?”*
- Talk with your child 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 about self-talk. Look for a moment when you notice your child is telling themselves a negative message like *“I can’t do it.”*
 - Use reflective listening for the unspoken message such as, *“I can see that you are telling yourself you can’t do it. Is that right? 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 to think about how to reframe that self-talk.

- Reinforce your child's response if it is positive or provide ways to reframe thinking: *"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 the chance to take steps to meet their challenges, taking responsibility for their own tasks or relationships even if you know you could do it faster or better.
- Be sure to consider how you can create the conditions to support their success.
- Initially, practice may require more teaching but avoid taking over and doing it for your child.

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

- Use "Show me..." statements to demonstrate how they can work hard toward a goal. *"Show me you can introduce yourself when we arrive at the birthday party."*
- Don't move on quickly if your child shows interest in trying something new. Children often need more time to stick with a challenge or pursue a goal. Be sure to wait long enough for your child 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 took a brain break and then got back to your homework. That's smart!"*
- On days when you can see your child is frustrated, proactively remind your child of their strength. In a non-public way, you can say, *"Remember how you introduced yourself last week to a new friend? How can you use that experience here?"*
- Actively reflect on how your child is feeling when approaching challenges. You can ask questions like: *"How are you feeling about your free time at school?"* Offering a chance to talk about lunch and recess gives insight into your child's social challenges.

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

- Notice. *"I notice you completed your homework today on your own in the time we agreed upon. Yes! Excellent."*
- Recognize small steps along the way.
- Build celebrations into your routine. Consider a hug when the routine is accomplished.

Recommended Citation: Center for Health and Safety Culture. (2020). *Confidence Summary. Ages 5-10*. Retrieved from <https://www.ParentingMontana.org>.



Brought to you by the Offices of Child Care, SAMHSA, and DPHHS. The views and opinions contained in the publication do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and should not be construed as such.