

# Self-Esteem and Behavior Management

The following suggestions and resources can help you build your child's self-esteem. If you have other questions or concerns about your child's behavior, please contact Child and Family Services at 651-229-3855.

## Building Self-Esteem

- Be positive! Everyone functions better in a positive atmosphere.
- Focus on and help children recognize their strengths.
- Be honest. Tell children what you like or don't like. For example, "I like it when you pick up your clothes."
- Talk to your child about positive or negative consequences of behavior. "If you do \_\_ , then \_\_ will happen."
- Encourage children to take responsibility for their actions. Doing so teaches them that they have some control over what happens to them.
- Children need to understand what's happening to their bodies. Discuss their condition with them and other family members.
- Encourage children to try new things and develop new interests.
- When children do something wrong, reassure them that you like them but that you dislike the behavior.
- Say "I love you" — a lot!

## Behavior Management

- Focus on changing one behavior at a time. Reward the behaviors you want your child to continue with verbal praise, charting, stickers or small rewards.
- Reward or punish soon after the behavior has occurred.
- Be consistent and follow through with rewards and punishment.
- Limit the number of rules and be sure children understand what's expected of them.
- To change negative behavior, try ignoring it. When you ignore behavior, you remove the child's audience so that the behavior loses its effectiveness.
- That said, never ignore destructive or aggressive behavior that could be harmful or may indicate a serious problem.
- Select punishment carefully. Physical punishment or yelling provides negative reinforcement and may encourage children to continue the behavior.
- When enforcing time outs, age is a good guide. Three minutes is enough time for a three-year-old. Eight minutes for an eight-year-old.

- Be realistic and remember that behavior changes slowly. If you don't see a change in about two weeks, try a new approach.
- If behaviors severely disrupt the family, seek professional help. A social worker or psychologist from Gillette can help you find helpful resources in your community.

## **Bibliography**

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If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](#).