

## Parenting Confidence

### BE CONFIDENT IN YOUR PARENTING CHOICES!!

Wouldn't it be great if one could just magically become a completely self-confident parent? It would be even greater if we could instill self-confidence in our children with the wave of a wand? Self-confidence is perhaps the most important trait an individual can possess and is slowly built in a human being from day one.

Confidence in one's decisions, looks, body shape, abilities and attitudes will get us far in life. We all know of important and/or famous people who seem to have self-confidence, without the traditionally accepted looks and talent going for them, who have succeeded splendidly in life. Self-confidence though is difficult to maintain in a fast changing world.

As parents we strive to instill self-confidence in our children every day. Some of the ways in which we do this are by setting boundaries, allowing them to make decisions and mistakes within those boundaries, teaching them to speak up for themselves with respect for others, giving them our time and attention, while respecting our own individual selves, allowing them time for free play, some structured activities where they can meet people in the outside world, exploration, and autonomy. Social-emotional child development is synonymous with self-confidence. In my opinion self-confidence is developed in children by "balanced parenting." Balanced Parenting to me is a nice mix of love and attention coupled with the proper amount (which is determined by each individual child) of appropriate "letting go". All of this is in preparation for the final question, the big event of parenting, the one that goes with us forever: How will they live as individual human beings in the real world? Please know that self-confidence is learned behavior and is taught from the first breath outside of the mother's womb.

As parents we constantly wonder if we are doing the right things for our children. Maintaining self-confidence with our choices and decisions is the most important tool in teaching it, and is a never-ending process. We grow and develop as humans continually. Development does not end when we turn 18, 28, 38, 48, 58 and so on. There is a plethora of research on this subject. Development is a process. It is important to be open to hear new points of view, new attitudes, even new world views, and change our minds, if that is appropriate for us. Being open to change is vital for continued development of any human being.

There are many choices as a new parent, many classes and programs that tout differing ideas about pregnancy, childbirth, sleep, feeding, schedules, diapering, nutrition, discipline, daycare, the list goes on. It is enough to distress the most self-confident of us all. However, if you have made an informed choice in any direction, even if it is a so called "different" choice, have confidence in your decision and above all, **BE OPEN TO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF YOURSELF!!!** Being confident yet open to change is some of the best modeling you can do for your children.