



NIDA Family Check Up: Encouragement

Everyone likes to feel encouraged. Sometimes when we get busy, we forget to pass on positive messages to our children.

Encouragement promotes self esteem in children by sending three messages:

YOU CAN DO IT.

Parents can help their children believe in their abilities by:

- Helping them **break down problems** into manageable chunks. Younger children should be given smaller tasks and older children can be given larger jobs. All children (age 2+) can be expected to help around the house in some ways.
- **Remind them** of strengths and past accomplishments. Success begets success, so children are more likely to achieve a goal if they are thinking about times when they struggled and then succeeded.
- **Share** how you have personally dealt with challenges in your life.

YOU HAVE GOOD IDEAS.

Children are more likely to believe they have good ideas when parents:

- **Ask them to share** their opinions and feelings. Some families like to discuss their day at the dinner table or right before bed. Although teens are often reluctant to share this information, letting them know that you value what they contribute to the conversation may over time help them to open up.
- **Listen** to what they have to say. Even if you do not agree with your child on every (or any) issue, you can be an active listener in the conversation.
- **Ask for input** concerning family plans and events. Children of all ages can help plan a weekend day or weekly dinner menu.
- Ask for ideas to **solve family problems**. Has the house become a mess lately? Are the family pets needing more care? Your child can be a valuable part of solving these problems.

YOU ARE IMPORTANT.

Children feel important when parents:

- **Remember** what children tell them.
- Make **time** for them each day.
- **Attend** school and extra curricular events.
- Let them know you are **thinking about them** when you aren't be with them.
- **Display** things they have made or recognitions they have received.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse reports, "encouragement is key to building confidence and a strong sense of self and helps parents to promote cooperation and reduce conflict. Many successful people remember the encouragement of a parent, teacher, or other adult. Consistent encouragement helps youth feel good about themselves and gives them confidence to:

- Try new activities
- Tackle difficult tasks
- Develop new friendships

- Explore their creativity”

Avoid discouraging your child!

Do not engage in sarcastic or negative comments about a child's ability, don't compare children to their siblings, resist taking over when a child's progress is slow, and do not remind your child of past failures.

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The National Institute on Drug Abuse compiled a booklet of positive parenting techniques that help prevent or reduce drug abuse.

The other techniques were:

- [Communication](#)
- [Negotiation](#)
- [Setting Limits](#)
- [Supervision](#)
- [Knowing Your Child's Friends](#)