

# FOSTERING SELF-ESTEEM In Children

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# Agenda

- What is self esteem
- Mistakes
- Messages for children
- Islands of competencies
- Courage
- Resiliency
- What changes self esteem
- How to build self esteem
- Questions and evaluation



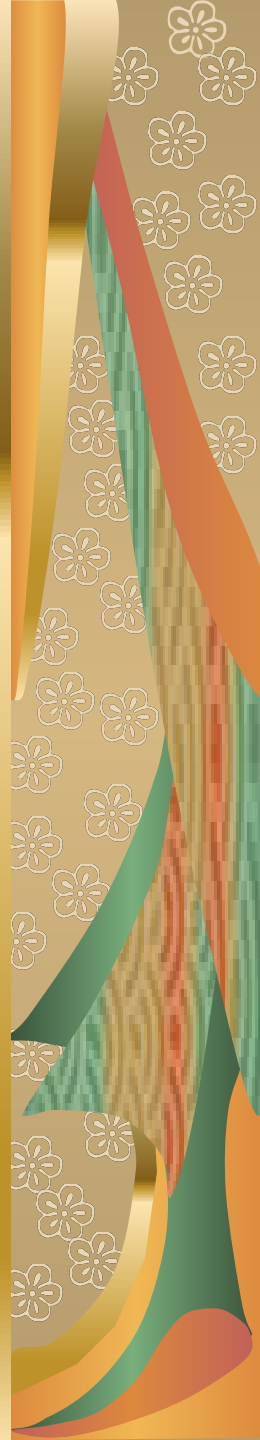
# What is self-esteem?

- It reflects a person's overall self-appraisal of their own worth.
- It encompasses beliefs (I am competent/incompetent), emotions (triumph/despair) and behaviours (assertiveness/caution).
- How someone else views us has an impact.



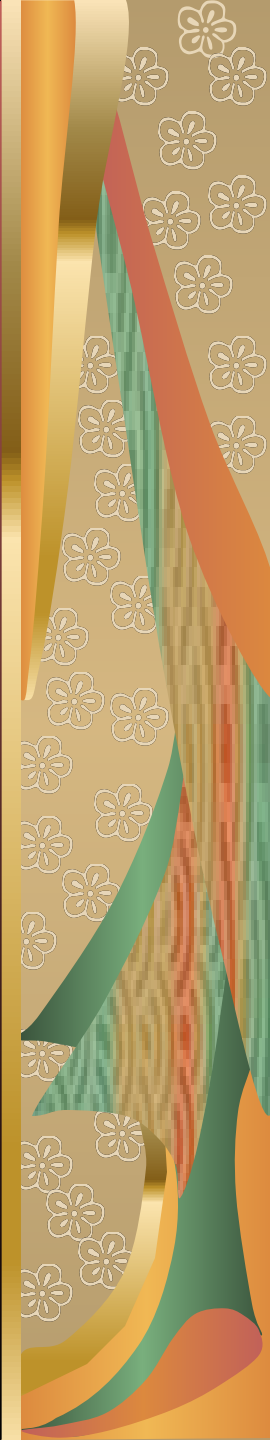
# What is Self-Esteem?

- The value you give yourself.
- The confidence and satisfaction a person has in her/himself.
- Our “self-perception”.
- How we feel about our achievements.
- Believing in yourself.
- I am lovable and capable.



# But it isn't.....

- Bragging
- Placing yourself above others
- Being perfect
- Being the best
- Having tons of friends



# The concept of self-esteem includes:

- the feelings and thoughts that others have about your competence and worth.
- your ability to make a difference.
- to confront rather than flee from challenges.
- to learn from both success and failure.
- to treat themselves and others with respect.



- *“Self-esteem is a major force in determining whether a person can overcome adversity and become resilient.”*

Dr. Robert Brooks



# HOW TO TELL IF A CHILD HAS LOW SELF-ESTEEM

- Sometimes it's stated directly, "I'm dumb" or "I'm stupid."
- How child copes with stress and pressure.
- Disliking yourself-never seeing the good.
- Doesn't feel like they are as good as others
- No confidence.
- Hopeless about the future.
- Focusing on the bad things in the world.
- Feeling like a victim.
- Feeling miserable.



# Low self esteem looks like...

- Feeling tired most of the time.
- Putting self down when others praise.
- No respect for self and others.
- Mistakes only happen to me.
- Being negative.
- Thinking that no one likes you.
- Avoiding fun activities or trying new things.

Source: Children, Youth and Women's Health Services, Australia

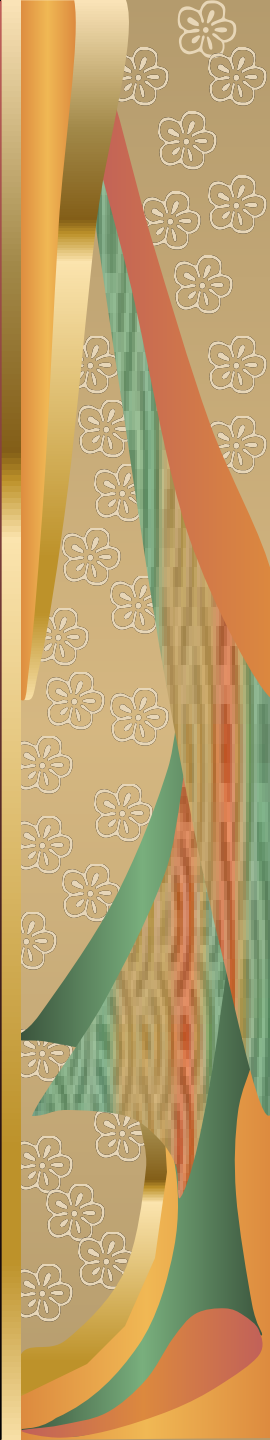
# Low self-esteem

- Their coping behaviours are counterproductive and self-defeating.
- For example a child who is having difficulty in school might start:
  - clowning around
  - offer excuses (this is boring or stupid)
  - blame others (it's the teacher's fault I'm failing).



# Good self-esteem looks like...

- A happy child.
- Feels that they are OK as a person.
- Believes in themselves (I can do it!).
- Sees the future as good.
- Enjoys things.
- Feels energetic and hopeful.
- Feels they have the power to change things.
- Plays with others, can join in.



# Good self-esteem...

- Finds ways to succeed.
- Can encourage others.
- Respects self and others.
- Makes the most of their good points.
- Tries new things.
- Can think for themselves.
- Accepts responsibility for their actions.
- Believes they deserve things.
- Accepts mistakes.

Source: Children, Youth and Women's Health Services, Australia



# Understanding a Child's Self-Esteem and Motivation

- Children with HIGH SELF-ESTEEM: view their successes as determined by their efforts and abilities.
- They give themselves credit for their accomplishments and feel a sense of control over what is happening in their lives.
- They experience success early in their life within a supportive and encouraging environment.

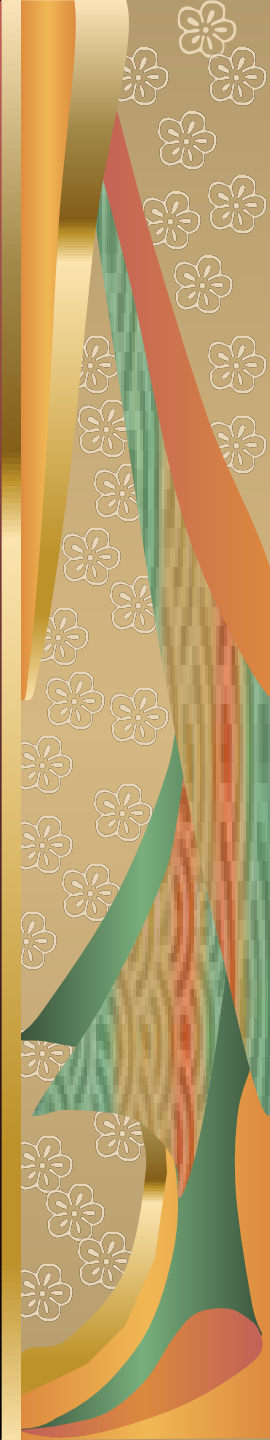
# Understanding a child...

- With LOW SELF-ESTEEM: this child may have encountered many frustrations and disappointments.
- They believe any of their achievements are based on luck and not on their ability to succeed.
- Example: “It was luck that I got a good grade” or “The teacher made the test easy.”
- Their perceived failure outweighs their experience of success.

- A child with high self-esteem would look at a bad test and see ways to seek extra help or to work harder.
- A child with low self-esteem might feel defeated and blame others or believe they can't do any better.
- It can become a vicious cycle of feeling hopeless and avoiding further humiliation.

# Consequences of Low Self-Esteem

- It can create anxiety, stress, increase likelihood for depression.
- It can cause problems with friendships and relationships.
- It can impair academic performance.
- It can lead to underachievement.
- It can increase vulnerability to drug and alcohol abuse.





# Mistakes

- GSE- believes that mistakes are experiences to learn from rather than feel defeated by.
- LES- believes that « I am a failure, I can't do well »
- We need to give the message that it is ok to make mistakes/ learn from them.
- Everyone makes mistakes.

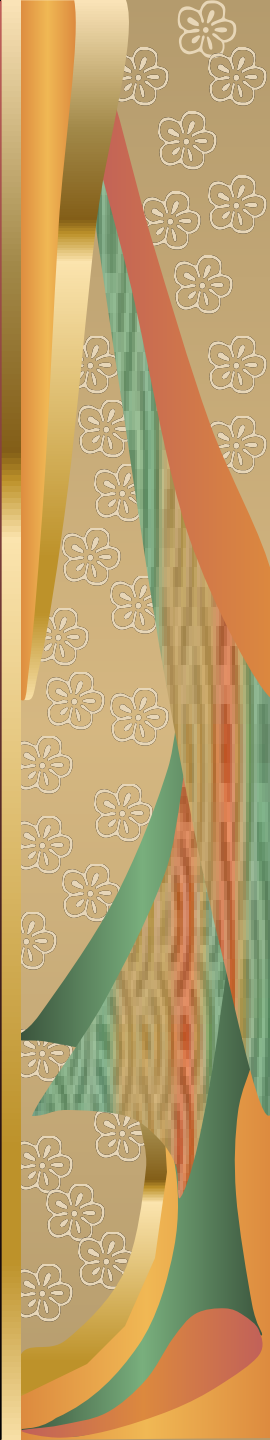
# Messages for children

- You are important.
- You have the right to express your beliefs and feelings.
- You have the right to have your own feelings, opinions and friends.
- You deserve love and respect.
- Concentrate on things you like about yourself
  - Relate to people who give you a sense of well being



*We must identify and reinforce  
each child's "islands of  
competence."*

*Dr. Robert Brooks*



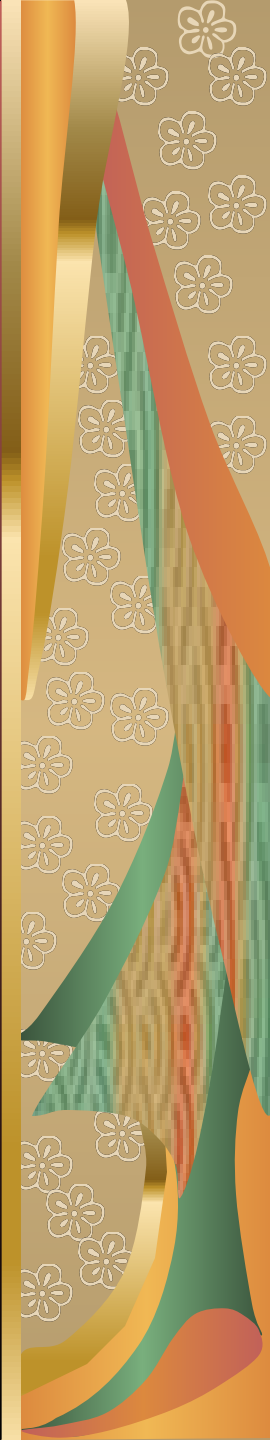
# Island of Competence

- Children with low self-esteem perceive themselves in some way as inadequate.
- To counteract their despair, it should be emphasized that every person possesses at least one small “island of competence,” one area that has the potential to be a source of pride and accomplishment.
- We need to find in children their area of strength and create a ripple effect in which children are more willing to move forward in situations that have been problematic for them.

# Areas of Strength

*“Being able to showcase our talents, and to have them valued by important people in our lives, helps us to define our identities around that which we do best.”*

Mark Katz, psychologist



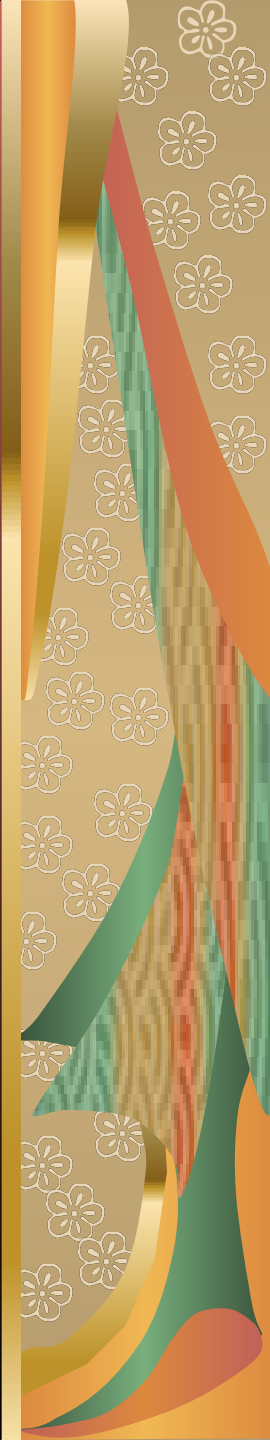
# Courage

- We must appreciate children's courage.
- They enter into sports, schools, parties, every day where they might feel at a disadvantage.
- Even simple acts of participation or attendance may reflect great bravery.
- Never lose sight of your child's bravery.



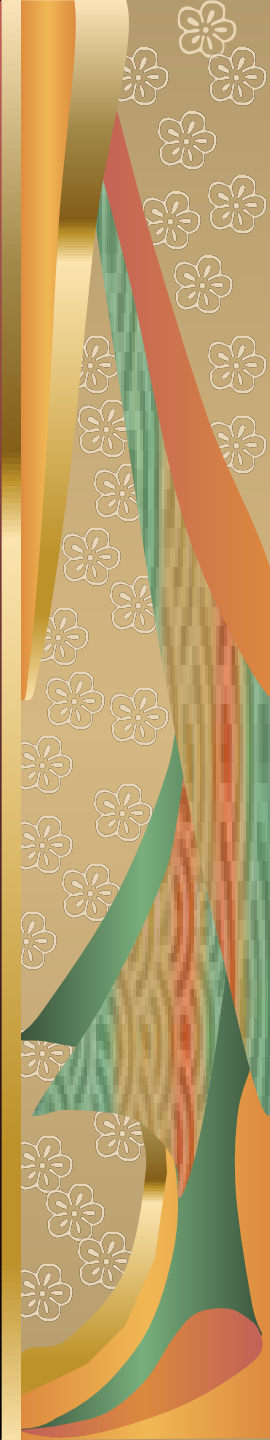
# Shyness

- Being a little scared around others.
- Everyone shy at one or another.
- Not by choice.
- Comes and goes.
- Good to be apprehensive.



# Causes

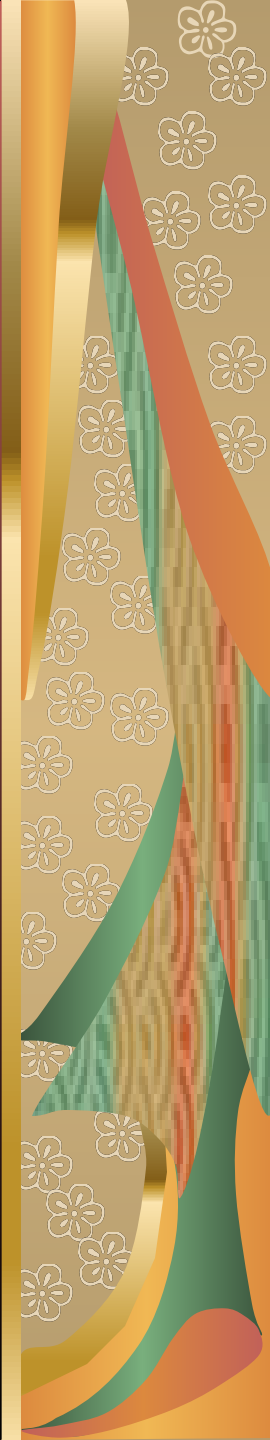
- Some are born shy, more sensitive.
- Past experiences.
- Periodic.
- Can go away after feeling settled.





# What to do

- Can be serious and require help.
- Stops you from doing things.
- Talk about it.
- Problem solve.
- Give the person time to be comfortable.
- Reassure-everyone feels shy every now and then.



# Resilience in Children (Ability to bounce back)

3 Domains influence children's resilience:

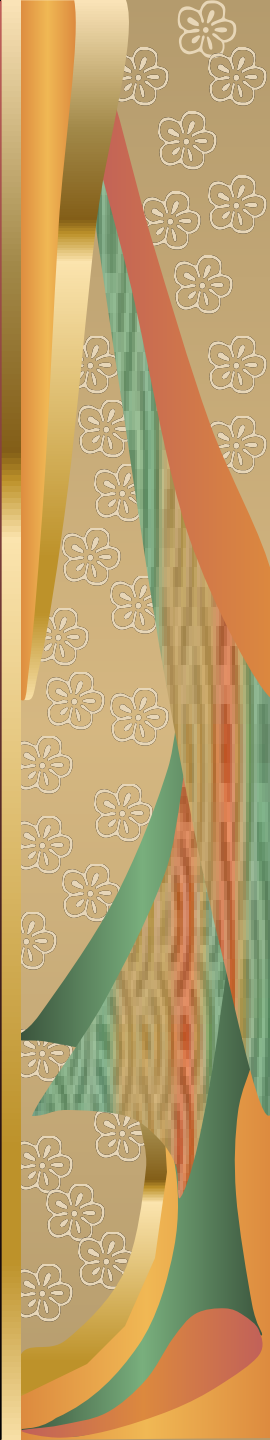
1. Characteristics of the Child:

- o temperaments
  - easy elicits + responses
  - difficult prompts angry/less empathic responses-creates a cycle
- o cognitive abilities
- o coping strategies
- o social skills



## 2. Family Characteristics:

- home environment (warm or hostile?)
- Boundaries i.e. limits
- emotional support; validate feelings
- Homes where there is little structure, warmth and emotional nurturing are less likely to produce resilient children.



### 3. Support of Larger Social Environment:

- o extended family, friends, church, sports.
- o A mix of adults who reinforce high self-esteem is vital in building resilience.



# Self Control and Coping

- Self-control is an important skill for all children to learn. It refers to power or control over one's actions. It also means the individual knows right from wrong.
- The skill of self-control will allow children to know that the right thing to do is to be tolerant of others despite differences.



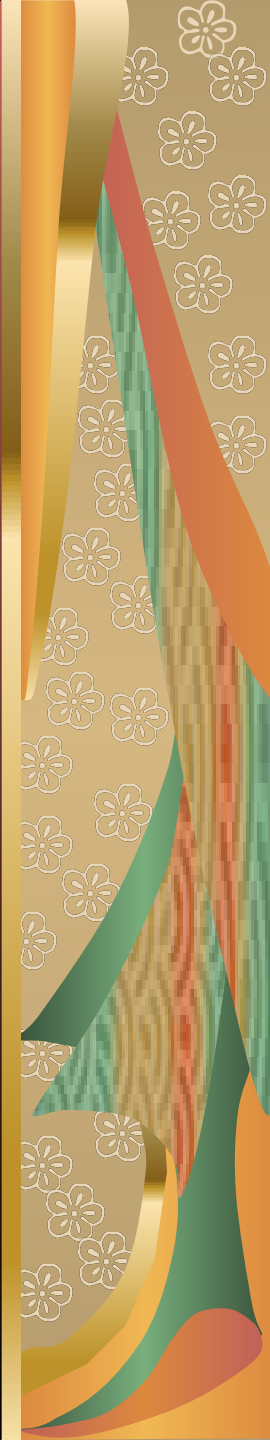
# Self Control and Coping

- Take a break: Encourage children to take a break or a time away from a situation where they are feeling angry or upset.
- Teach and provide attention.



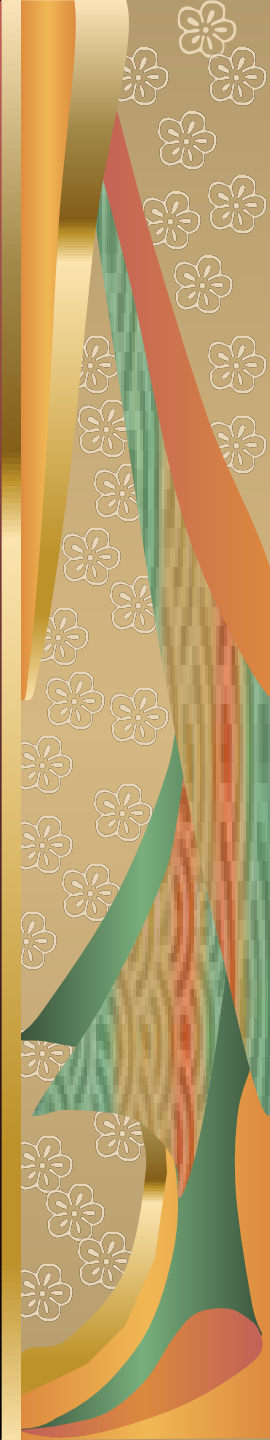
# Self Control and Coping

- Teaching children ways to calm themselves down under stress.
- Control impulses.
- Delay gratification.
- Anger management.



# Self Control and Coping

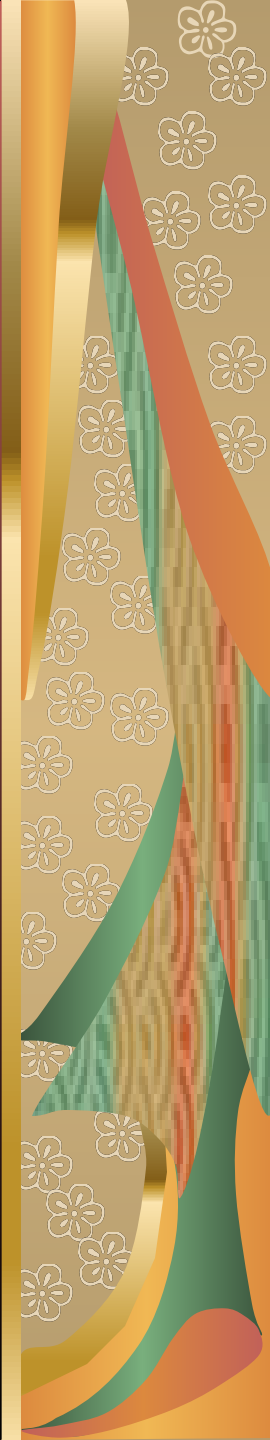
- Use appropriate rewards: Children need consistent positive feedback to learn appropriate behaviour. Praise and attention are very rewarding as is special time with a parent.
- Use specific activities: Skills including dealing with what I can't have, understanding feelings, and controlling anger.





# What changes self-esteem?

- Loss of encouragement from parents, teachers, friends.
- Constant negative input, then believing it.
- Struggling in school, not getting support.
- Family moves and child doesn't make friends right away.



# What changes self-esteem?

- Parents divorce, no support, reassurance, blames themselves.
- Child feels too fat, too thin, ugly-can feel they aren't good enough.
- Dealing with an illness-feels different from others, less confident.
- Puberty-changes in the body, not on track with others.



# Importance of Social-Emotional Skills

- Protective factor: Children who begin school without age-appropriate social and emotional competencies are at greater risk for school failure. (Raver, 2002)



- Social emotional competencies reduces violence and promotes prosocial behaviours (Schonert-Reichl, Smith, & Zaidman-Zait, 2002)
- Prosocial behaviours displayed by students in the classroom were found to be better predictors of academic achievement than were standardized test scores (Wentzel, 1993)



# IQ/EQ

- IQ contributes to about 20% of success in life, that means that another 80% is left.
- Emotional and social skills are far better predictors of success and well-being than academic intelligence. (Goleman, 1995)



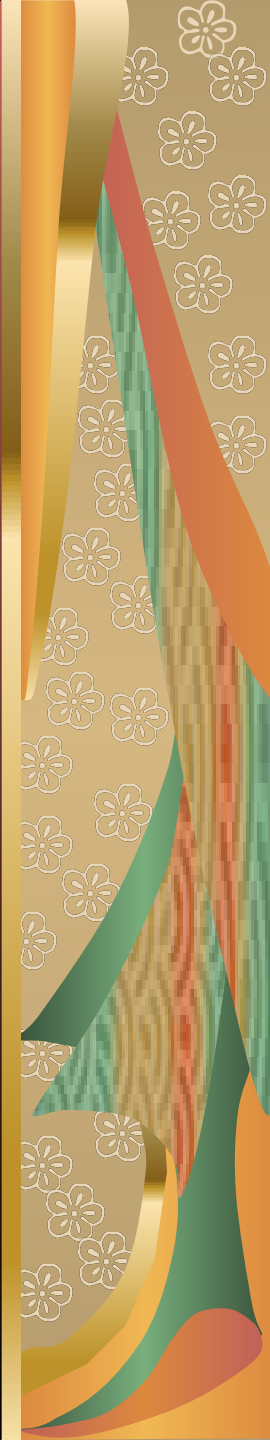
# Goleman's Five Competencies

- Self and other awareness: Understanding and identifying feelings.
- Mood management: handling and managing difficult feelings, impulses, handling anger constructively.
- Self-Motivation: Being able to set goals and work towards them.



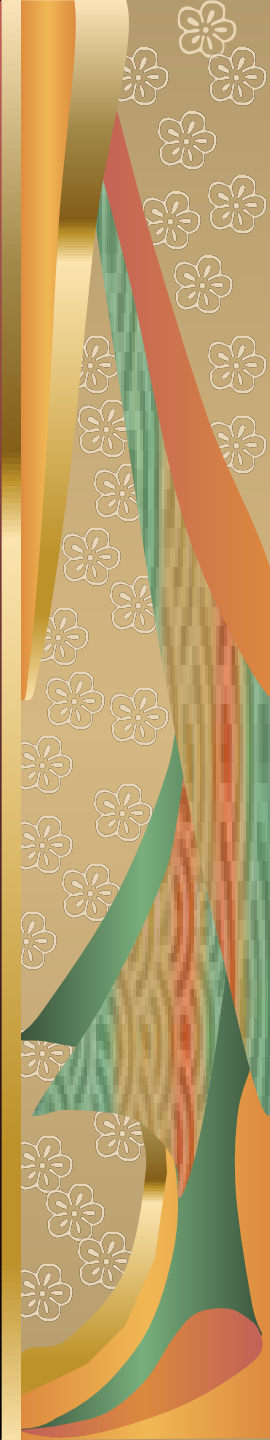
- Empathy: Being able to put yourself in someone else's shoes both cognitively and affectively.
- Management of Relationships: Making friends, handling friendships, resolving conflict, cooperating, sharing, etc.

The mastery of these five competencies result in enhanced emotional intelligence.



# Responsibility

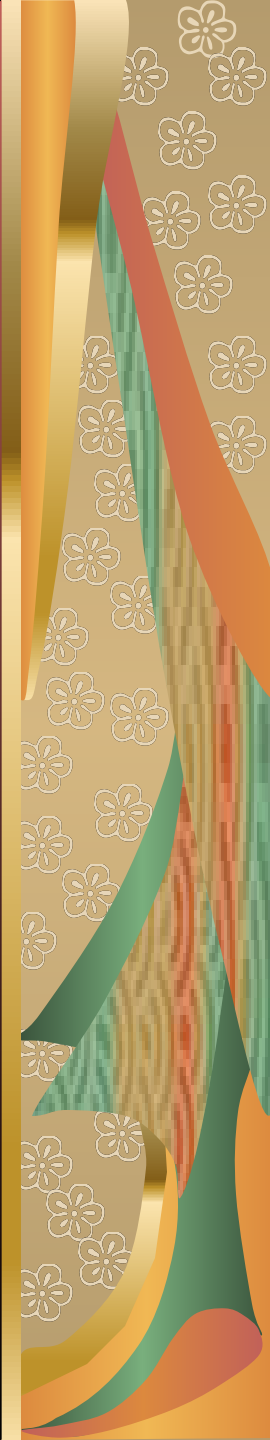
- Builds self esteem.
- Give children an opportunity to be responsible at home at school.
- Helping a child do what their supposed to do, when their supposed to do it e.g.. Keeping your room tidy.
- By helping children take responsibility for their choices for their actions gives them a sense of pride.





# BUILDING YOUR CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM

- Be the coach, not the cheerleader. The coach fosters growth and self worth.
- Encourage your child to not be hard on themselves.
- Look at mistakes as something to learn from.
- You can't control what others say, think.
- Focus on positive things. What they can do. Redirect inaccurate beliefs.



# Building self-esteem

- Positive peer relationships is essential
- Peers provide opportunities for children to feel capable, to belong, to be respected and have fun.
- Positive experiences at school or community.
- Children who are involved in recreation, arts, or cultural activities have an opportunity to discover their place in their community.



# Building self-esteem

- Increase interaction with adults and peers.
- Decreased stress and anxiety.
- Enhance social and life skills.
- Enhance relationships.
- Acknowledge 1 thing each day that your child says or does that you appreciate.



# Parents can...

- Give positive, accurate feedback.
- Watch what you say
- Set a good example.
- Be affectionate.
- Create a safe, loving home.
- Involve child in positive experiences
- Provide opportunities to make choices.

Source: KidsHealth.org, Iowa State University

# Parents can...

- Encourage your child to do their best and empathize effort rather than success.
- Love your child regardless of achievements.
- Encourage your child's initiative rather than criticize their attempts.
- Provide realistic expectations for your child. Understanding developmental differences.



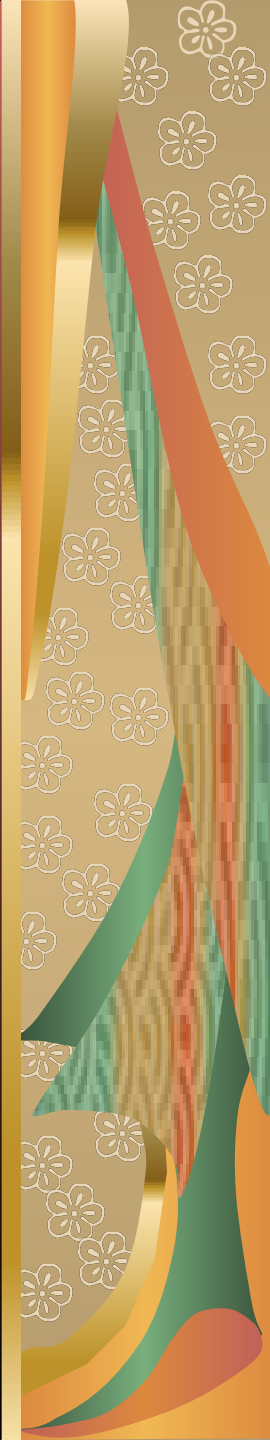
# Parents can ...

- Identify your child's abilities. Identify something positive about something they are having difficulty with.
- Acknowledge your child's feelings as important and valuable.
- Give unconditional love and show acceptance through your daily expressions.



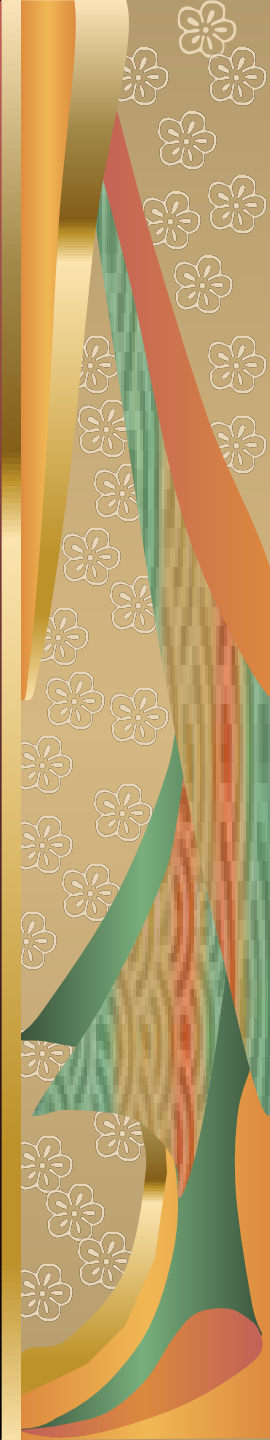
# Parents can ...

- Spend time together-play, work and relax together.
- Tell them often “I like what you did/said” and “I love you”.
- Teach children to be persistent, not to give up.
- Help them stand up for themselves or for others for something they know is right.



# Parents can ...

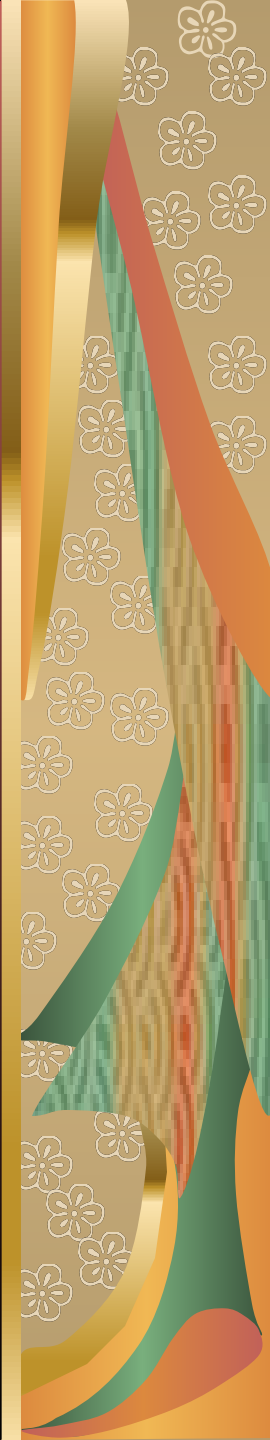
- Teach them that negative self-talk is self-defeating and positive talk helps you feel good about yourself.





# In the Classroom ...

- Help each child to find a way to contribute in the class.
- Responsibility encourages involvement.
- Set them up for success. Equip them.
- Review report cards together in a calm way.
- Set realistic goals, expectations.
- Show interest.
- Build a rapport with the teacher.



# Children can...

- Focus on the things they are good at. Make a list.
- Recognize the negative self talk and change it.
- Say positive things about themselves.
- Try to find the good in things (body image)
- Accept that there are things they can not change.
- Acknowledge that everyone makes mistakes: learn from them.
- Keep good friends.
- Ask for help. It's OK.



# Conclusion



- Let us be that charismatic adult for our children.
- Believe in them, stand by them.
- Help them to feel special, teach them responsibility.
- Focus on their strengths.
- Teach them to learn from their mistakes.
- Generate hope in them.
- Show them they are lovable and capable.

Check these out...

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

[www.cyh.com](http://www.cyh.com)

[www.ottawa.ca](http://www.ottawa.ca)

## The Explosive Child

Ross W. Greene, PhD

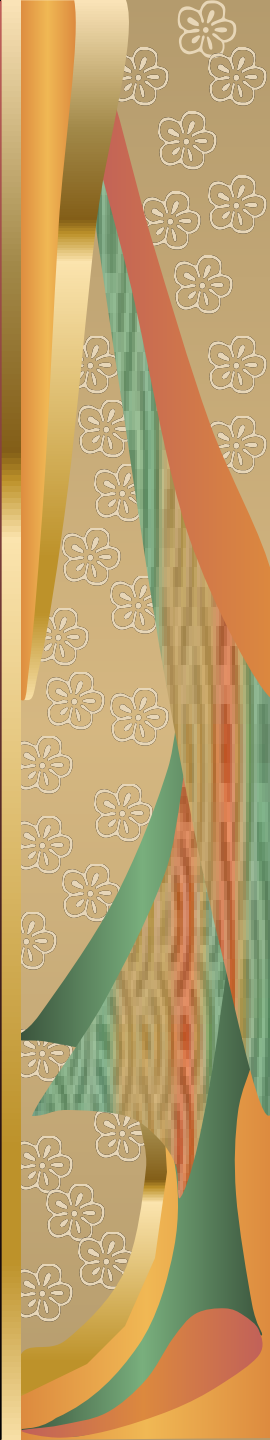
## The Hurried Child-growing up too fast too soon

David Elkind, PhD

## Kids are worth it!

Barbara Coloroso

All sources may not be cited.



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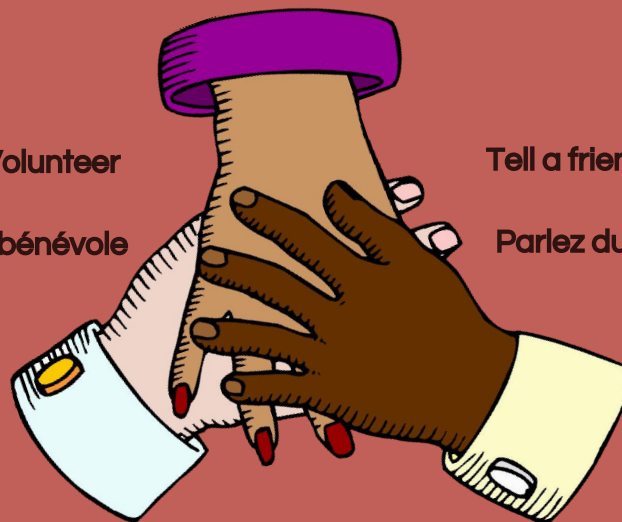
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