



How can I help my baby to develop self esteem?



“Your baby wants to be important to you!”

Self esteem is shaped by those underlying messages that you give your baby, such as:

- “you’re loved”**
- “you make me laugh”**
- “I love being with you”**
- “you are so clever!”**

Through messages such as these, baby learns that relating to others is good and gives pleasure. Baby also learns that they are important to others.

- Start by spending time with your baby to **get to know their likes and dislikes**.
- Give your baby the **time to “have a go”** at trying something, with you there to support and encourage. For example, they may want to hold the spoon and try feeding themselves! Let them have a go, and gently put your hand over their hand to help them guide the spoon into their mouth. (Remember to talk to baby as you guide them through it.) With practise they will become more skilled and be so proud that they can do it themselves!
- Give baby **just enough help** to make them want to have another go and keep on practising until they can do it well. This will give baby **confidence** to try new things.
- **As your baby becomes a toddler**, spend time to understand them as an individual – who will try to become more independent and confident in their skills. *Just remember that sometimes their body skills are not strong or coordinated enough to achieve what they want to do, but practise and encouragement will help.* Have **realistic expectations!**
- **Reward their efforts** with hugs, praise and encouragement. Don’t expect top results to start with - it takes lots of practise to become confident at doing something!
- **Teach them the skills they need** – but start simply and gradually build up the level of skill.
- **When you praise your child**, describe what they have been doing. For example: “I really like the way you looked at that toy and figured out how it works. How clever you are!”
- Enjoy watching your child grow and develop into a confident and independent little person!

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