

The Building Blocks of Self-Esteem

Helping Students Feel Capable

Make mistakes okay.

Talk about mistakes.
Equate mistakes with effort.
Minimize the effect of making mistakes.

Build confidence.

Focus on improvement.
Notice contributions.
Build on strengths.
Show faith in students.
Acknowledge the difficulty of a task.
Set time limits on tasks.

Focus on past success.

Analyze past success.
Repeat past success.

Make learning tangible.

"I-Can" cans.
Accomplishment Albums.
Checklists of skills.
Flowchart of concepts.
Talks about yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Recognize achievement.

Applause.
Clapping and standing ovations.
Stars and stickers.
Awards and assemblies.
Exhibits.
Positive time-out.
Self-approval.

Helping Students Connect

Give students the five A's:

Acceptance.
Accept sincerely and unconditionally.
Accept students' personal style.

Attention.

Greet students.
Listen to students.
Teach students to ask for attention.
Spend time chatting.
Ask students about their life outside school.
Mention what you've talked about before.
Eat with students.
Invite students to eat in your room.
Attend school events.
Get involved in a project with students.
Schedule individual conferences.
Join students on the playground.
Chaperon school events.
Recognize birthdays.
Make baby-picture bulletin boards.
Send cards, messages, homework to absent students.
Show interest in students' work or hobbies.

Appreciation.

Describe the behavior accurately.
Use three-part appreciation statements.
Focus only on the present.
Give written words of appreciation.
Teach students to ask for appreciation.

Affirmation.

Be specific.
Be enthusiastic.
Acknowledge positive traits verbally or in writing.

Affection.

Show affection when things go badly.
Show kindness, and it will multiply and be returned.
Show friendship.
Use affectionate touch when appropriate.

Helping Students Contribute

Encourage students' contributions to the class.

Invite students' help with daily tasks.
Request students' curriculum choices.
Ask students' input for rules.

Encourage students to help other students.

Peer tutoring.
Peer counseling.
Peer recognition:
Applause.
Appreciation and affirmation statements.
Happygrams.
Appreciation password.