



# Bournemouth Parenting Practitioners Tip Sheet

## Building Self-Esteem in Boys

Self-esteem is an important part of every day life. Children and young people often struggle with a lack of self-esteem, and so it is vital that you work to encourage your children as often as possible in order to boost their confidence and help them develop into well-rounded adults.

Boys face many challenges when it comes to self-esteem. Society traditionally labels boys who express their emotions as weak and vulnerable. Boys need as much comfort and support as girls, but tend to be reluctant to ask for it for fear of being ridiculed. You can help your son's confidence by:

- Letting him know that it is ok to express his feelings. Encourage him to talk about them, and provide a nurturing environment where he feels safe to do so.
- Praise his good behaviour and effort. Your words have a strong impact on your child, and regular verbal encouragement will make your son feel better about himself.

Remember also that it is not always about the end result—focus on the effort that he has put in.

- Encourage him to take on responsibilities and be independent. Letting him carry out odd jobs around the house will give him the confidence and self-belief that he can do things by himself.
- Allow your son to be himself. If he is not particularly interested in typically masculine activities such as sports then do not force him to take part in them. Encourage him to pursue the things he is actually interested in, and provide opportunities for him to participate in them. By accepting his personal choices, you will let him know that it is ok to try new things.
- Be a positive role model. Fathers in particular need to be involved in developing your son's self-esteem. Your son is more likely to be happy and independent as an adult if his father shows an interest.





### Warnings

Changes in your son's behaviour, such as reluctance to try new things or withdrawal from the outside world can indicate a lack of self-esteem.



### What to do

Develop a good relationship with your son. Encourage him to express his feelings and allow him to participate in the things he is interested in, rather than forcing him into anything.



### What to say

Praise your son for his effort and good behaviour. Avoid criticising weaknesses, and instead focus on the effort that he has put in to doing something.



### Prevention

As parents, you should get involved with your son as early as possible—especially fathers. Show interest in what he does, be open to alternative interests and accept his choices.

### Useful Contacts

For more information, advice or support, contact:

- Parentline Plus, telephone: 0808 800 2222
- Bournemouth Parenting Practitioners, telephone: 01202 453965

