

Taken from Sharon's book:  
*[Being a Great Mom, Raising Great Kids](#)*

## 50 Great Ideas for Building Self-Esteem in Children

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Once Martha Taft was asked to introduce herself to her elementary school classmates. She stood tall and said, "My name is Martha Bowers Taft. My great-grandfather was President of the United States. My grandfather was a United States Senator. My daddy is ambassador to Ireland. And I am a Brownie." Undoubtedly, someone had taught Martha she had great value.

Making our children feel a strong sense of worth is paramount in building self-esteem. However, nothing is more powerful in battling feelings of insecurity, inadequacy, and inferiority than a solid understanding of who we are, what we have, and where we are in Christ. We can try the best we can to build self-esteem, but Scripture says, "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain, who build it," (Psalms 127:1). This is especially true when it comes to building self-esteem. We can help, but ultimately, a person's true value is found in Jesus Christ.

Self-esteem is how a person feels about himself, how much he likes the person that he is, how comfortable he is with his weaknesses and how in-tune he is to his strengths. Is it biblical? Absolutely. A proper understanding of who you are in Christ gives great confidence. This understanding also keeps us from becoming prideful as we realize that it is nothing we have done or ever could do to attain such a heavenly inheritance. Jesus did it for us. We have great worth, not because of *who* we are, but because of *whose* we are, and that keeps self-esteem in proper perspective.

Self-esteem is not pride or conceit. Someone with high self-esteem is so comfortable with who he is and the value he has as a child created in the image of God, that he has no need to try to impress others. But, self-esteem based on appearance and performance causes pride, which we will see later as false gods of self-esteem.

With all that said, we as parents can do much to help children see their value and build a healthy sense of self-esteem. Let's take a look at a few helpful ideas.

1. Say "I like you" and mean it!
2. Thank your child for helping around the house.
3. Celebrate special achievements by letting your child eat on "the special plate." At our house we have a red plate that says "You Are Special Today" written around the perimeter. On special days, such as birthdays, the person of honor gets to eat off the red plate. I even take a picture and keep a "Red Plate Photo Album."
4. Provide opportunities for your child to achieve success such as a school play or earning Scout badges.
5. Include your child in planning family activities.
6. If your child has a knack for design, allow him or her to rearrange or paint his or her bedroom.
7. Help your child set realistic goals and reach them.
8. Make a scrapbook to chronicle important events.
9. Make a Big Picture book using 8 x 10 photos from school and sports teams.
10. Record and watch home videos of your child.
11. Create a Birthday Memory book with a photo of each year and recordings of major events.
12. Frame your young child's art work and display it in your home.
13. Help your child open a savings account with his or her own money.
14. Encourage your child to do jobs around the neighborhood such as cut grass, water plants, walk pets, baby sit, pick up mail for those on vacation.
15. Purchase or make a banner or flag for each child and fly it on his or her special days.
16. Teach etiquette rules such as proper introductions, how to address an adult, when to extend a hand for a handshake, which eating utensil to use for which course, when to stand when a lady approaches. Good manners give a child and young adult confidence in social settings. If you aren't sure of the rules yourself, read an etiquette book and learn them together.
17. Create a "sick tray" to serve a child who is under the weather. Include a special plate, a flow.
18. Assign your child a household project: painting the garage, raking the leaves, sweeping the sidewalks.
19. Build a model airplane together.
20. Teach your child how to play a sport well.
21. Touch your child when you talk.
22. Give lots of hugs.
23. Give lots of kisses
24. Put a chocolate kiss in your child's lunch box.
25. Catch your child doing something right at least twice a day.

26. Text your child special messages.
27. Email your child special messages.
28. Have young children put away their toys when they are finished playing with them.
29. Make children responsible for keeping their rooms tidy.
30. Provide a tutor if your child has an academic struggle.
31. Let your child pick out his or her own clothes. Younger children may need to be given a choice of three items to pick from.
32. Don't finish your child's sentences for him or her.
33. Don't allow your child to use self-criticism such as, "I'm so ugly," "I'm stupid," or "I can't do it."
34. Allow mistakes.
35. Cut apron strings gradually, but cut you must.
36. Help your child start an at home business such as a lemonade stand or window washing service.
37. Teach your son or daughter a new skill, such as baking a cake or changing a tire.
38. Let your child occasionally be in charge of cooking dinner.
39. Allow your child to contribute financially to a family purchase.
40. Encourage your child to make a donation to a worthy cause.
41. Listen to your child practice a musical instrument.
42. Ask your child's opinion on a big family decision.
43. Help your daughter fix her hair.
44. Decorate your child's locker door on his or her birthday.
45. Send a balloon-o-gram to school on your child's birthday.
46. Take lots of pictures.
47. Look at his/her photo albums together.
48. Make of list of 25 reasons he/she is special.
49. Tuck notes in his/her lunch bag.
50. Tuck him/her in at night rather than sending them off to bed.