

Taken from Sharon's book:  
*Being a Great Mom, Raising Great Kids*

## Helpful Ideas for Getting Over "I Can't-itis"

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When my son was very young, he had a problem with a four-letter word – *can't*. When he was learning to ride his bike without training wheels, he said, "I can't." When he was sitting down to read his first book in kindergarten he cried, "I can't." When he was trying to back the car out of our very curvy, hilly driveway for the first time, he said, "I can't." Of course he did do all these things...eventually. I taught him to say, "I can't yet, but I will do it."

We finally had to out-law the words "I can't" in our household. "Can't" was placed in the category with other four letter words. We've stressed that failure is an event, not a person. When he was an adolescent, I also bought Steven a T-shirt that read, "Quitting is not an option" printed across the back, which he wore it until it was threadbare. I also placed the following poem in his room as a reminder of our "I can't" rule. I encourage you to print it off and keep pull it out when you're having a bout with doubt.

### **The Man Who Thinks He Can**

If you think you are beaten, you are.  
If you think you dare not, you don't.  
If you like to win, but think you can't,  
It's almost a cinch you won't.  
If you think you'll lose, you're lost,  
For out in the world we find  
Success begins with a fellow's will.  
It's all in the state of mind.  
If you think you're outclassed, you are.  
You've got to think high to rise.  
You've got to be sure of yourself before  
You can ever win a prize.  
Life's battles don't always go  
To the stronger or faster man

But sooner or later, the man who wins,  
Is the man who thinks he can.  
Author Unknown

Here are fun facts to encourage the person suffering from “I can’t-it-is”

- After Fred Astaire’s first screen test in 1933, the director noted, “Can’t act! Slightly bald. Can dance a little.”
- Louisa May Alcott, author of *Little Women*, was encouraged to find work as a servant or a seamstress.
- Beethoven’s violin teacher once told him he was a “hopeless composer.”
- Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper editor for lack of ideas.
- Thomas Edison’s teacher said he was too stupid to learn anything.
- Albert Einstein did not speak until he was four years old and didn’t read until he was seven. His teachers described him as mentally slow.
- Isaac Newton did poorly in grade school.
- Henry Ford failed and went bankrupt five times before he finally succeeded.
- Babe Ruth set the homerun record (714), but he also held the record for the most strikeouts (1,330).
- Winston Churchill failed sixth grade.
- One basketball player missed 9,000 shots in his career. He lost more than 300 games. Twenty-six times he was trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. His name is Michael Jordan. He said, “I’ve failed over and over again in my life. And that’s why I succeed.”