



## **Overview**

### **Boost Kids Lessons**

The following are the topics covered by the Boost Kids program that are designed to learn how to build self esteem in kids.

#### **Chapter 1 Meet & Greet**

Greeting People - Key step to build self esteem in children!  
Eye Contact  
Smile  
Turn Up the Volume  
Telephone Manners

#### **Chapter 2 Making Conversation**

Become a Good Listener  
How to Handle People that Brag

#### **Chapter 3 Encouraging Thoughts, Encouraging Actions**

Say Thank You  
The Glass is Half-Full, Not Half-Empty  
Give Compliments  
Accomplishing Goals - Key step to build self esteem in kids!

#### **Chapter 4 Respecting Others**

Treat Others With Respect  
Don't Talk About Other People Behind Their Backs  
Do Something Nice! It's Addictive!

#### **Chapter 5 Positive Traits**

Have Patience  
Don't Let the Little Things Bring You Down - Key step to building self esteem in children!

#### **Chapter 6 Self-Improvement**

Feel Good About Yourself  
Don't be a Complainer  
Create Your Own Identity  
Improve Your Mood

## Chapter 7 Life is Great! Go After It!

Be Passionate  
Have Fun  
Try New Things

## Chapter 8 Strategies in Life

Don't Announce Your Strengths/Admit Your Weaknesses  
Resist the Dark Side  
Apologize Quickly and Sincerely  
How to Handle Being Teased

# Building Self Esteem and Confidence in Children in Today's Society

*by Charlie Copp*

Building self esteem and confidence in children is a task very close to the heart of every parent and in today's society that task is becoming increasingly difficult. The expanding influence of Technology and the Media have become contributing factors to an atmosphere not as conducive for building self esteem and confidence in children at the same level as in years past. This results in young people lacking or under developing the confidence and self-assuredness they need to enter into social situations, exhibit the character necessary for overcoming challenges in life, and have a healthy self-esteem. All the gadgets, media messages, and societal pressures kids are receiving have only isolated or frustrated kids in new and counter productive ways. Below we will take a closer look at both of these societal changes and the affect they have on building self esteem and confidence in children today.



## Technological Advances

Technology in our modern society continues to advance by leaps and bounds. Everyday there seems to be a new and faster computer, ever growing multifaceted cell phones, increasingly realistic video games, and a centuries worth of music that fits into your pocket. For kids today these devices have become the center point of entertainment. The once coveted walk around the neighborhood, backyard Super Bowl, and after school social gathering has been replaced by hours of video games, music downloading, and surfing the net. A child today has the ability to entertain them selves for an entire evening or even weekend without having to socially interact with another kid.

The result is that kids are not developing the people skills needed to confidently function socially as much as in years past. This lack in confidence and exposure socially can be addressed by making people skills more of a priority. Come up with the basic people skills you feel are most important or seek out materials that cover these skills and review them with your child. It does not have to be in a formal session but could be something to mention in the car or at dinner. It is also important to encourage your child to initiate being more social such as having friends over or greeting people confidently when they see someone they know. For instance, whenever you are in a social encounter with a friend, co-worker, or anybody make sure to include your child in the interaction. This helps them gain valuable experience and gives them an opportunity to build their confidence socially. These measures might seem insignificant but they go a long way toward developing your child's people skills, giving them the knowledge and experience they need to build their self-esteem and confidence.

## Media Pressures

The Media is also a forum that has been advancing with great strength and has exhibited a high level of influence in our society. The concept of Media here refers to television, movies, the internet, magazines, newspapers, advertisements, and other forms of mass information. The impact these Media outlets can have on young people can be stifling and can complicate the process for parents in building self esteem and confidence in their children.

One specific example we will discuss is body image and the impact the Media can have on young people. Kids are constantly bombarded with images of tall, skinny, atypical models or actors on television, in the movies, in magazines, and in advertisements. They see this image portrayed as "cool" or "the only way to be". Then, as we all do, young people will



compare them selves to these individuals. This process can make kids feel they must attain this "look" to gain acceptance in our society. In reality the percentage of people with these types of body characteristics are extremely low, yet kids feel pressure to look this way and when they are unable to attain this look it can negatively affect their self-esteem. This is why it is important to address these issues with young people and help them develop a less superficial set of criteria by which they see them selves. Look at various advertisements, for example, and discuss the image it is trying to portray. Explain to your child that most people do not look like models and it is more important to be a good person then to look a certain way. Help them build their self-esteem and confidence based on things they can control: how they treat others, accomplishing a task, being responsible, and having a good attitude. Emphasize these characteristics and other similar traits as unequivocally more important then the image the television, movies, and advertisements try to portray.

This is only one example of the pressure certain media outlets can have on our young people. Other themes in the Media, such as materialism, can also influence young people into thinking they need to base how they feel about themselves on certain clothes, shoes, cars, and other possessions. As we know as adults, these material things do not make up who we are as people. They will always fade away, get old, and be replaced. The same emphasis from body image is in important with addressing materialism as an insufficient mode for building self-esteem. Being a good person, respecting others, helping others, accomplishing tasks, being responsible, having a good attitude, and never quitting are the lasting characteristics that develop a positive self-esteem. These traits should be emphasized to contradict the materialistic messages young people are receiving from numerous media outlets. This emphasis will help parents in the process of building self esteem and confidence in their children.

In conclusion, the two societal factors we have discussed here are just a few of many that can under develop young people socially and put unhealthy pressure on them. Increased academic and athletic pressures could also be included in this area. As kids are becoming measured based exclusively on ambiguous test scores, wins and losses, and their physical appearance or are lacking in experience and confidence socially, it is time for a re-emphasis on the traits kids need for building the self-esteem and confidence necessary for life. Socially, help them focus on the importance of people skills and give them numerous opportunities of gaining this valuable experience. Have them pay for things at the grocery store or lead the conversation at the bank along with some of the suggestions we discussed earlier. This is a great way to build their confidence. With self-esteem, encourage young people to focus on the things they can control, as mentioned above. Also help them understand that the efforts they put into being a good person or doing well academically or athletically are not worthless if people do not respond positively to them or they do not get the grade or the win they wanted. Simply, through the process of being respectful, studying for a test, or training for an event young people are developing characteristics they can be proud of, it just needs to brought to their attention Societies criteria might not be met, but you can help them set a new criteria of giving full effort and being proud of the respectfulness, resilience, and perseverance they display each day. This approach will help parents in building self esteem and confidence in children even if they lost the game, got a "B" on a test, or do not look like the models in advertisements.

## **How BoostKids Can Help:**



BoostKids is a program that can help increase a child's confidence by teaching social skills to children and building their character. BoostKids has been and is currently being taught in schools, non-profit organizations, and after-school programs. The program is now available as an at-home training program for children and their parents. The key training tool of the BoostKids program is an interactive CD-ROM that shows kids the right-way and the wrong-way to handle social situations. They learn from real kid actors in real-life scenerios!

## People Skills:

The ability to use one's knowledge efficiently and readily in the effecting of positive interactions with other human beings; both individual and group interactions.

It sounds pretty technical but really it is just the ability to interact with, deal with, and positively encounter our fellow human beings. It is the ability to extend your self to others and relate on a common level. The use of genuine people skills expresses interest in and concern for another person and values the interaction between two individuals or a group. For kids (and even adults), it is a great way to build self-confidence socially, and to help break down the youthful wall of tension that can exist when they are interacting socially with another person.

We can all picture and relate to the situation. A child sees a fellow classmate with their parents at the movies and he or she quickly tries to avoid the situation. The child moves closer to their parent in an effort to hurry them along into the theatre, a convenient haven from the impending social interaction. As the child is pushing the parent along the parent notices the child's classmate and parents. The child's parent abruptly moves towards the classmate's parents to say "hello". The interaction is not long. Both parties are moving along to their movie, but during the interaction the child is very shy, avoids all eye contact, and must be nudged by his or her parent to speak up and say "hello".

Now imagine we try the situation again and this time the child will be schooled in a few basic people skills. As the child notices the classmate entering the theatre they quickly tell their parent, "I see one of the kids in my class. I'll be right back". The parent then notices the classmate and their parents and follows behind slowly. The child walks right up to the classmate and says "Hello, Mike" or "Hello, Samantha", shakes his or her hand, making eye contact, and asks, "What movie are you going to see?" The child then begins to say "Hello" to the classmate's parents and by this time the child's parent has caught up. The interaction lasts for another minute and then concludes with polite good byes and an "enjoy the movie". People skills and the confidence to use them can make a pretty big difference, as seen in these two scenarios. Is the second scenario a pipe dream? Not necessarily, kids just need to know what to do. These situations can be nerve-racking for them. "I don't know what to say", "How long should I talk?", "I don't know if I can do it?" This leads back to our original question of how to achieve people skills, but before we take it up we need to focus on our second question to continue to lay the groundwork.



Why are people skills important for kids, especially today? Part of the answer is as common as when you were growing up. People skills help kids communicate better with teachers, make friends, build self-confidence, and develop the ability to relate to, deal with, value, and interact with people. Developing

these skills will positively impact kids lives in the present and, as importantly, in the future. As my boss mentioned earlier, people skills can make a significant difference when it comes to our careers later in life.

The other part of the answer to our “Why” question is especially relevant for kids today. With technological devices increasingly controlling the after school time hours of many kids today opportunities for social interaction are decreasing. The face-to-face interactions where kids develop the skills to interact with each other are at premium. A child can entertain himself or herself for an entire evening without ever directly interacting with another person. They can email a classmate, text message a friend, play video games, download music, and surf the web for hours with no social interaction. With the forum for kids to socially interact becoming increasingly smaller people skills are losing their priority. However, they are not losing their importance and so a re-emphasis on people skills with kids today and in general is greatly needed. People skills are the avenue through which human interaction begins to take place and this is the essence of what we should be doing as adults and teaching our kids; to value, respect, engage, and develop meaningful relationships with the people we encounter.

All right, so with all this jargon from above, how do we get things running on the ground? How do we answer our question of how to achieve people skills? Well, there are a couple of points that are very important to help kids learn how to achieve people skills. One simple strategy is to directly emphasize the importance of people skills. Talk to kids about how essential they are in life. “It will help you make friends, build confidence, present your self in a positive way, and develop the social skills necessary for success later in life”. This emphasis is very important so that kids understand how people skills can impact and improve their lives.

## **Social Strategy**

- Be first to say “hello” to break the ice
- Try and use the person’s name in the greeting if you know it and if you don’t know it, ask, and then remember (it) for the next time
- Give a firm handshake, smile, and make eye contact
- Stand Tall and Speak Clearly
- After greeting the person ask a few questions to see how they are doing and to get the conversation going.
- It’s OK to end the conversation just do it politely. “It was really good seeing you, take care”.

Giving kids a specific set of skills to rely upon will help them feel more comfortable in the social situations they encounter. The skills acquired will help them feel better prepared to engage others socially. Confidence building only takes place through experience so kids will need to be initially encouraged and reminded to use the people skills they have learned so they can gain experience and increase their confidence. Be on the lookout for opportunities for kids to socially interact with other kids or adults and encourage them to use the people skills you are emphasizing with them. Whether you are at the movies, grocery store, or school it will be great practice for the kids.

by Charlie Copp

## Teaching Children Social Skills? Boost Kids? Explain!

When people first here about Boost Kids it brings a variety of questions to there mind. What exactly does it teach? What is the goal of the program? How does it work? These are all familiar questions as parents and educators try to put their arms around the concept of Boost Kids and I will hopefully provide the answers to these questions and any others you might have in the following paragraphs.

In thinking about the first question, the basic focus of Boost Kids is to teach children social skills and character development. These two general areas are covered throughout the program with a variety of topics. There are twenty-eight topics in all which range from greeting people, eye contact, speaking clearly, listening, and telephone manners on the social skills side to resisting peer pressure, handling being teased, accomplishing goals, and respecting others on the character development side. The children are exposed to the philosophy behind each topic through a reading in the Activity Book. This helps to explain the concept of the topic and how their actions can affect others. The kids will also see a real life video scenario for each topic through the use of the Boost Kids CD-ROM. This helps the kids visually see the right and wrong way to handle situations relevant to their lives and how some of their own actions might be portrayed. By providing the background understanding behind the various topics Boost Kids teaches children social skills and character development basics by directly giving kids ideas, skills, and tools necessary for successfully navigating through life.



The second question posed by many parents pertains to the overall goal of Boost Kids. The main goal is to help increase the confidence of kids in social and character testing situations. When a child is confident they not only interact and develop stronger relationships with others, but they feel better about themselves. Building confidence in kids is a constant theme throughout each lesson in Boost Kids and the entire program.

As explained above, Boost Kids covers important areas of social development for kids as well as have a legitimate and essential goal for kids to attain. However, the last and most important question is, "How does it work?" The purpose of Boost Kids is to provide kids with the knowledge and awareness to function socially and exhibit strong character. By teaching the children social skills and character development they are learning about skills they will immediately encounter and use in life. Boost Kids gives them a specific strategy to use and remember in a variety of situations in their lives equipping them with the "know-how" to operate in these situations. This helps increase kids' confidence because in the back of their mind they know how to handle the situation. It is no longer, "What should I do?" but

rather, "I know what to do". This increased awareness helps to build confidence and with each new encounter that confidence continues to grow. Whether it is greeting someone or resisting pressure from peers Boost Kids provides a game plan for the child to confidently deal with the situation. Each time they greet someone or rise above the pressure their confidence will grow through the experience they have gained.

Teaching children social skills and character development are vital parts helping kids successfully function in the world we live in. Making sure that your kids are equipped and aware of these important skills will help them confidently enter into situations where they will be challenged. When encountering these situations in their lives you want them to blossom and overcome rather than to shrink back and avoid. Boost Kids provides simple and easy strategies for kids to use in a variety of situations they will inevitably encounter. Through this increased knowledge your kids will blossom in socially challenging situations and gain confidence each step along the way. Article by Charlie Copp