



CARING WORKS
FOR KIDS INC.
EMPOWERING YOUTH

Family Kit

Ages 3-7

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Kids Help Phone is a Canadian Help Line for children and teens that is available 24/7

Kids help phone: call 1-800-668-6868 or text 86868

<https://kidshelpphone.ca/our-services/>

Parent note and instructions:

Welcome parents and guardians. We want to work with you in building your child's self-esteem and self-confidence. Please read through the following notes prior to teaching the program to your child/ren. Let's get ready to teach!

- The setting: Finding a quiet space in the home is best, with as little distractions as possible.
- Materials: some materials may be needed for some activities. Be sure to read through each activity so you are prepared. We always recommend child friendly, safe materials.
- Read through: It is best to read through the material you will be teaching, prior to teaching it.
- If a child is having a difficult time with a program, assess the situation to decide if it is right for them, or consider trying the program at another time. Children who are tired or hungry for example, may not be able to focus and join in as easily as a child who is feeling well-rested.
- It is suggested that the parent or guardian of the child, teach the program. Please note, that when we refer to the 'parent' throughout the programs, this would mean the person who is the guardian of the child, be it their parent or other guardian.
- It is suggested to complete the program exercises and activities, in the order they are placed in, as they are designed to be taught in steps.
- It is suggested that programs be taught one per day, as consecutively as possible, so that children begin to practice these self-esteem activities as a routine. Exercises can be and are encouraged to be repeated in order to help build self-esteem and healthy practices.
- We want to help you shape your child's mind to be happy and full of self-love. A child who feels good about themselves will have natural self-esteem and self-confidence. This starts in the home with their family, the ones who they love most! Those closest to them will teach them who they are. All activities are meant to be done in a quiet, supportive, non-judgemental setting.

Please note: Caring Works for Kids Inc. program designers are not physicians, councillors, therapists, or mental health workers. Our goal is to work with educators and families to help children build self esteem. Caring Works for Kids Inc. asks that prior to using its products or programs, parents first speak with their physician about the affect, if any, of our products or programs on., or if they have concerns about, their child's mental health. Some content in our products and programs may result in sensitive discussions for children and may even cause upset. Please act with caution and read all the product and program material prior to using it to work with children. Caring Works for Kids Inc. is not responsible or liable for any loss, personal injury, damage, or expense that a customer or anyone using, or participating on the use of, the programs or products may suffer. Once a program or product is purchased, it is no longer our responsibly. Caring Works for Kids Inc. products and programs may not be suitable for children dealing with severe; anxiety, depression, or other mental illnesses, disorders, or stresses.

“Candles and Flowers” Introduction to meditation

Instructions: Have child/ren sit in a circle together with you. Begin with a discussion and then the exercise. If your child is having a difficult time sitting still for these, try taking mini breaks, such as having a stretch, in between. Each time this exercise is done you can make it shorter or longer, depending on how your child is feeling.

Materials: None needed

Discussion: During this discussion, we want to guide children in understanding that our thoughts come from our brain and different thoughts can make us feel different feelings. We also want them to know that it is ok to have these feelings. Ask your child/ren things like; “Where do our thoughts come from?”, “How do we feel when we think about sad things, funny things, happy things?” Explain that sometimes when we are feeling upset from our thoughts, we can calm ourselves down by practicing ‘meditation’. Meditation is when we think about something that calms down our thoughts and our body. In this meditation, we are going to think about, or ‘focus’ on our breathing. Our breath is a great thing to use as a tool to meditate, because our breath is with us wherever we go so we can meditate at any time.

Exercise: Parent and child/ren can sit cross-legged on the floor comfortably. Parents can explain; In our right hand we will pretend we are holding a bunch of flowers (allow the child/ren to decide what type and color they imagine their flowers to be.) With our left hand, we will make a fist, but point our pointer finger up in the air, pretending it is a little candle (allow the child/ren to decide what color their imaginary candle is.) Next, we will start by taking a deep breath, holding our right hand (our flowers) close to our nose, sniffing in deeply to smell our flowers! And then, we will hold our left hand and our candle up to our mouth, but a little farther away, and blowing out of our mouths we will pretend to blow out our candle. Repeat this 3 times, smelling in the flowers and blowing out the candle, gently. Encourage the child/ren to think about the flower and candle and their breath each time.

Discussion: After practicing the meditation, ask your child/ren things such as “When you did the meditation what did you think about?” and, “How did you feel when you were doing the meditation”? Next, parents can repeat the meditation.

Next steps: It is suggested to practice this meditation on an ongoing basis when children are calm. Once children become familiar with this practice it can be used to help calm them down in more stressful situations.

“Feelings are Ok” Discussion guide and activity

Instructions: Have child/ren sit at a table or workspace where they will be able to take part in a craft activity. The discussion for the program can be done while parents are working with their child/ren on the activity.

Materials: Parents will need to prepare 5-10, 3-4 inch in diameter circle cutouts. These can be made from white paper, bristol board or construction paper. For younger children, less will be needed. Markers or crayons will be needed, along with glue and either straws or popsicle sticks.

Discussion: During this discussion, we want to guide children in understanding that all of us have many different feelings and that our feelings are OK to have. Ask your child/ren things such as “What are some feelings we might have?” Examples might be ‘happy, sad, angry, frustrated’. We can guide children to understand that while it is OK to have feelings, it might not always be OK to act on them. Offer an example such as “If we are angry that is OK, but it is not OK to hit someone because we are angry at them.” Guide your child/ren to understand that it is not OK to hurt others or ourselves from our feelings, and, if we are feeling bad about ourselves at any time, it is important to talk about how they are feeling. We don’t want to feel bad about ourselves, we want to love ourselves.

Art activity: Using the paper circle cut-outs, have your child/ren draw different faces on each circle. The faces can each show a different feeling or emotion. For example, whatever ‘feelings’ they can give examples of, they can draw, such as happy, sad, etc. Once the faces are complete, assist your child/ren in gluing the straws or popsicle sticks to the back of the circle so that it can be held in their hand, like a puppet.

Next steps: Encourage your child/ren to use these ‘face puppets’ to describe how they are feeling at future times or during the discussion to give examples. Taking the time to play with the puppets along with your child/ren, creating mini scenarios using different feelings and emotions, will help build their self-esteem. It shows them that feelings are OK to have, and it helps build a comfortability for them to talk about their feelings.

“Let it out!” A discussion guide, exercise, and activity to help kids express themselves in positive ways.

Instructions: Have your child/ren practice some of the different expression activities while you have this discussion with them. For their art activity, it is best to have them seated at a workstation, such as a table.

Materials: For the expression activities, you will need a ball to kick, a teddy bear or favorite stuffed animal or toy, and a pillow. For the art activity, you will need a piece of paper to draw on and the medium of your choice to draw with, such as a pencil, crayons, pencil crayons or markers.

Discussion: During this discussion, we want to guide children to understand that if we are feeling upset it is important to express, or let out, those feelings in a positive way. Positive ways are those in which we are not hurting anyone, not hurting ourselves and not damaging things. Ask your child/ren such things as; “What are some ways we can let out our anger, sadness, and frustration?” Write down these ideas, always encouraging and guiding them to come up with ideas that are positive. Examples might be; When we are angry or frustrated, we can kick a ball outside, or yell into a pillow. If we are sad, we can hug our parents or even a favorite bear. This is a good time to ask your children if there is anything they would like to talk about or ‘let out’. You can ask things such as “Has anything been upsetting you? Anything making you feel angry, sad or scared? We can always talk about it and let it out together”.

Exercise: As you discuss the above, or shortly after, have your child; kick a ball outside, hug a favorite stuffed animal and yell into a pillow. As they try these exercises ask them how doing these things makes them feel. Reminding them that these exercises are not hurting anyone and not hurting themselves or damaging anything, so they are OK to do. And, they help us ‘let out’ our feelings and emotions.

Discussion: During this discussion, we want to reiterate that it is important to let out how we feel in healthy ways. Once we 'let out' our feelings, we can then think about things that make us feel happy and calm. One way to do that is to create a 'happy thought'. Ask your child/ren; "What place, person or thing makes you feel the happiest?"

Art activity: Have your child/ren draw a picture of their 'happy thought'.

Next steps: Posting up your child's picture of their 'happy thought', in a place where they can easily see it, is a great tool to encourage positive thinking. Reminding them to look at it periodically and asking them to describe how they feel when they look at it, will help keep the practice of positive thinking. The next time they are upset, angry or sad, have them practice one of the above activities, such as kicking a ball. Then, once they are calmed down, have them look at and talk about their 'happy thought' again. Practicing this promotes both healthy expression and then changing the thinking back to a positive patterning. As well, offering your child the chance to talk with you about how they are feeling on a regular basis is important. Reminding them you are there to listen and help them 'let it out', will encourage them to express such feelings, rather than hold them in.

“Feel good thoughts and words” Discussion and exercise to encourage finding the positives

Instructions: You can either sit with your child/ren at a workstation, such as a table, or, you can sit in a more comfortable setting, and use a clipboard to complete the exercise. You or your child can fill in the worksheet below as you discuss positive thinking and ‘finding the positives’.

Materials: You will need a pen or pencil to write out your answers, and a clipboard if you do not have use of a table.

Discussion: In this exercise, we want to guide children to think positively and to seek positive solutions. ‘Finding the positives’ in situations is a practice that can help children feel empowered. They can ‘choose’ to see the bright side of things, the opportunities and the good in any situation. Discuss this with your child/ren as you fill out the sheet together. Try to come up with some of your own ways to ‘find the positives’ and practice this daily.

Exercise:

Finding the positives means, finding ways to make something better, to do good, or to see the good in things even when they seem bad. There is always opportunity and even good in every situation, and there is always a way to turn a frown upside down. Can you ‘find the positives?’

Here is an example:

We are all ready to go outside and play in the sunshine, but now it’s raining outside! What can we do to make this situation ‘positive?’

We can put on our boots and raincoat and go for a walk with an umbrella, or, we can stay indoors and do a craft. We can see the rain as something good as it feeds the plants and grass, and we can use the time to do something else fun.

Now it’s your turn!

See the questions below:

You were supposed to go on a play date with your best friend, but your friend is sick so now you can't go. You might be sad, but what can you do to make this situation better, what can you do to 'make this positive?'

Your favorite toy got broken, you are upset but what can you do to make this situation better, what can you do to 'make this positive?'

You must write a test tomorrow at school, but you're nervous. What can you do to feel better and 'make this positive?'

If you hurt someone's feelings and you know it wasn't kind, what can you do to make it better and 'change it to positive?'

You must do your chores, but you would rather be watching your favorite show, what can you find 'that is positive' about doing the chores that will make doing them easier and more fun?

Can you think of a 'not so great' situation that you could change by 'finding the positive's?'

Next steps: Getting kids to 'find the positive's' will help them deal with situations that are unpleasant. It is a form of problem-solving that allows them to feel they have a choice in a matter that otherwise may make them feel they have no control over. Positive thinking and seeing the opportunity in things will allow them to focus on a more positive approach to life.

“Let’s talk” discussion guide and game, for family bonding and self-esteem building

Instructions: Your child/ren and family members can join in a quiet, comfortable setting, preferably in a circle. Remember that family members could be grandparents, aunts, uncles, or even close friends that have become like family! Please note that this game can be played with lots of family members or even two family members. If you are playing with two people, just omit the instructions about ‘to my right’ or ‘to my left’ and direct all the fun to your other family member!

Materials: Parents will need to prepare the game ahead of time. You can prepare/cut 20 strips of paper, approximately 4 x 3 inches, which will act as cards for the game. You can then cut out the following phrases and glue them to your strips of paper. Alternatively, you can cut the phrases out and use as is without a backing however, gluing them to a thicker paper will allow them to be more durable.

Discussion: Once the family is joined in the room, the cards can be placed in a pile, face down in the center of the circle, on a flat surface. Parents can then explain the game and the family can begin playing. The goal of the game is to get your child/ren and family talking positively and kindly to one another. When saying encouraging things, and expressing our love to our family, we are supporting family bonding and allowing for positive self-esteem building.

Instructions for the game: Once everyone is seated, the oldest person in the room will draw one card from the top of the deck and read it aloud. That player will have to perform what the card says. When the player is finished with the card, they can place it face up beside the card deck. All members take one turn in a clockwise direction until all the cards are complete. At that time the deck can be shuffled, and your family can continue playing another round, or, the game can be complete. There is no way to ‘win’ this game, it is an interactive activity to get families having fun. Each time you play this game, try to give different answers. This is a great addition to a family fun night!

Next steps: Playing this game often as a family, will encourage both family time and speaking kindly to one another. Finding nice things to say about one another feels good to the person saying it and the person hearing it.

Please find the phrases below and let's get talking and having fun!

What is your favorite thing about the person to your right?

Look at one person in the room and give them the biggest smile, see if you can make them smile back.

Look at someone in the room and try to make them laugh with a funny face.

Look at the person to your left, name something nice they did for you.

Look at the person to your right, name something they are good at doing.

What is your favorite thing about yourself?

Name something nice you did for someone.

Who is your best friend and why?

What do you like best about your family?

Pick one person in the room and do a funny dance with them.

Pick one person in the room and give them a big hug.

What is your favorite thing about the person to your left?

What is your favorite family memory?

Look at the person on your right and tell them what makes them special.

What is your favorite family memory?

Sing a silly song with the person to your right.

Make up a love poem about the first person you look at after you read this card.

Look at the person to your right, tell them what their best talent is.

Do 25 jumping jacks with the person on your left, while you both sing a favorite song!

Name three things you are thankful for about the first person you look at after you read this card.

“I am thankful for…” Discussion and art activity to promote gratefulness.

Instructions: For this activity, it is best to have your child/ren sitting at a craft workstation such as a table.

Materials: Parents will need to pre-prepare an assortment of art materials for this collage. You will need a blank piece of paper, preferably larger than 8 x 10 and preferably thicker than regular paper to stand up to glue. Also needed will be either glue or a glue stick, scissors for cutting (parents can do this part if the child is too young) and cut-outs/photographs/magazine/newspaper pictures that will represent what topics your child chooses. Your child can also draw the pictures if you cannot find them to cut out. Any decorations to add to this art piece are a welcome and fun addition such as beads, sparkles and more! You will also need a piece of paper and pencil to first write out your ‘grateful list’. If your child is helping you cut things out, we always recommend child safety scissors.

Discussion: Through this discussion, our goal is to get kids thinking about what they are grateful for. Being grateful will promote positive thinking, appreciation, calmness, and kindness. Start this activity with a discussion by asking; “What are some things or people you are thankful, or grateful for”. Younger children may need this explained to them, simpler terms might be to say, “these are things we love to have in our lives such as ice cream, cartoons and our family!”

Art activity: First begin, during the discussion, by helping or having your child/ren write down their ‘grateful list’. This is a list of things they are grateful for. The older the child, the more things they can add, but for younger children, a list of 3 or 4 things is a great list! Examples might be my room, my blankie, my stuffed bear, my Mom, pizza and so much more! Once the list is complete you can then begin your ‘gratefulness collage’. On your larger piece of thick paper, use cut-outs, drawings, decorations, and words to turn your list into a work of art. For example, if your child is grateful for their family, cut and paste a picture of your family to the collage. Use as many creative ideas as you can to make a masterpiece!

Next steps: Once your collage is complete you can post it up where your child can see it each day. When they are feeling sad, or when they are feeling they cannot have something they want, encourage them to look at the collage and recount all the things they are grateful for. These are the things we do have, the things we love and the things we appreciate. Encourage them to be thankful for these things. Practising gratefulness on an ongoing basis will help them with self esteem, confidence and positive thinking.

“Mirror, mirror” positive affirmations exercise.

Instructions: Have your child/ren sit in front of a mirror, or, have them hold a mirror up to their face so that they can easily see themselves and talk to their own reflection.

Materials: All you will need is a mirror, either immobile or handheld, but it should be large enough to show a full face.

Discussion: The goal of this activity is to have children learn how to practice positive affirmations. Saying kind things to ourselves is a part of loving ourselves. If children practice this and learn to do so with comfortability, it is a tool they can continue to practice always, be it out loud or in their minds. The discussion can take place as you do this exercise with them. Parents can join in as well with their own mirror, to set a great example. Guide children in understanding that we need to talk to ourselves like we would our own best friend. We need to speak with kindness, love, patience, and understanding to ourselves. An example might be “I am a good person,” or, “I am very intelligent and smart”. When they look in the mirror and recite affirmations, however, have them change the phrases to ‘second person point of view.’

Exercise: Sitting in front of the mirror, have your child/ren look at their own face, into their own eyes, and, as if speaking to another person, have them speak to themselves, reciting some kind phrases. Remember parents, you can do this too! Here are some positive affirmations to try. As well, let them try creating some of their own!

- You are beautiful/handsome
- You are intelligent and smart
- You are awesome just the way you are!
- You are kind
- You are special
- You are a good friend
- You try your very best
- You are good enough
- You are loved
- You are safe
- You are lovable
- You have so many talents!
- You are so strong
- You are important in this family and this world
- I love you!

Next steps: It is strongly advised to have your child focus on phrases about inner beauty, good actions and their personality and not outer beauty or material worth. For example, loving the self because one has great hair or nice clothes is not self-esteem building. Such things can be lost or fade, so seeing these as a part of self-worth doesn't help create a good sense of self. This is an opportunity for children to see and be happy with, their true selves. "Mirror, mirror" is a great exercise to do each day. Any time your child brushes their teeth, for example, make it a practice to have them say something wonderful to themselves in the mirror!

“I’m my own BFF!” Discussion and activity about self-care practices

Instructions: This discussion and activity are best done at a workstation such as a table, since children will be drawing a picture.

Materials: You will need paper for drawing, along with paper to make a list, as well as a pen or pencil to make your list and mediums such as pencil crayons, crayons, and markers for your child to create their picture.

Discussion: During this discussion, we want to introduce children to the idea that they can be their own ‘best friends forever’ (BFF’s). Ask your child/ren things such as “How could we treat a best friend?” and, “How could we speak to a best friend?” Guide them in remembering it is important to treat our best friend with kindness, respect, and love so therefore if we are our own ‘BFFs’ then we could then treat ourselves with the same kindness, respect, and love. If we care about ourselves, we can speak to and about ourselves with kindness, and we can also do things to take care of ourselves every day, to help make sure we are healthy. Make a list, with your child, of all the things we can do to ‘take care of ourselves.’ Examples might be brushing our teeth, drinking enough water everyday, getting exercise and more.

Art activity: Have your child create a picture that shows some of the examples in your/their list. They can create pictures of how we can take care of ourselves and be our own ‘BFF’.

Next steps: Each time your child takes part in one of the self-care practices they have listed, remind them that they are ‘taking care of themselves’ which is something we do when we ‘love and respect ourselves’. Remind them during these simple practices that this is a great way to be their own ‘BFF!’. Also, if you find your child making negative comments about themselves or putting themselves down, remind them that they need to speak to themselves as they would speak to their best friend; with love, kindness, and respect.

“Super Me!” Activity for self-esteem building, self respect care and love

Instructions: This activity is best done at a workstation, such as a table, since children will be doing an art activity. You may need extra room however since the art piece is life-sized!

Materials: You will need a piece of paper to make a list, and a pen or pencil to do so. You will also need a large piece of paper, preferably paper that is thicker to hold up to glue or paint, such as cardboard or bristol board. If you do not have paper long enough to create a life-sized picture, you can tape multiple pieces of the paper together until you reach the required length. You will also need a variety of art mediums, such as pencil crayons, crayons, markers, paint, glue, magazine cut-outs, or photograph cut-outs. Parents will also need scissors. We recommend child-friendly scissors if your child/ren will be helping you cut things out.

Discussion: In this discussion and activity we want to introduce children to the idea of the “Super me.” “Super me” is a fun way to look at ourselves and all our great attributes and characteristics. It is a celebration of who we are, and of all the things that make us authentic and special. Whether it is a challenge we have faced or something we work hard at, these “Super” things help make us who we are! Using your paper and pen or pencil, discuss with your child/ren their “Super me.” Write down their answers to create a list. Ask questions such as “What things make you special?” “What do you like best about yourself?” “Have you achieved something you are proud of?” and “What are your talents?” List as many things as you can on your paper. This is also a great time to reiterate being our own ‘BFF’ and reminding children that we can choose to love, respect and care for ourselves the way we would a best friend. This is a great trait of our “Super me!”

Art activity: Next, place your life-sized piece of paper on the ground and have your child lay down, face-up on the paper. Having them be very still, use a pencil to trace their outline to create a silhouette. Once complete have them stand up off the paper. Next, they can help you use a marker to draw over the pencil outline to make it darker and more visible. Now the parent can cut out the silhouette. Next, your child can decorate the silhouette to become their “Super me!” Following the list you have created, they can draw, use cut-outs, pictures, fancy designed words and more to represent the things on their list. They can also draw in things such as their face, and clothes, or be creative and use other materials and mediums. The goal will be to decorate the silhouette with colorful and fun art that represents all the aspects of their “Super me.”

Next steps: Once your artwork is complete, you can post it up where they can see it each day. It is a great reminder that they have so many wonderful things about them and that they are each “Super kids!” Whenever they are feeling they cannot meet a challenge, or need a boost in believing in themselves, this is a great art piece to go back to!

“Family fun” activities for the whole family to practice kindness, compassion and giving back.

Instructions: This discussion and activity are meant to involve your whole family. Begin with a discussion in a comfortable setting, having someone take notes of the ideas you come up with. The activities will be decided on by the whole family.

Materials: Initially, for your discussion, you will need paper and a pen or pencil. For whichever activities you choose to do, you will need to account for those materials and plan for those as well. In our ‘making a card’ example, you will need thick paper, a pencil and different art mediums such as pencil crayons, crayons, markers or paint. Or if you choose to bake something nice for a community member, you will need all the ingredients. Be as creative as you like!

Discussion: In this activity and discussion we are trying to guide children in thinking of others and planning ways of ‘giving back’ to our community and others. Whether it’s a neighbor, a family member or a community member, we can say thank you to them for being a part of our lives in a good way. As a family you can introduce discussion starters like; “There are lots of people in our community that do things for us, can you think of some of them? How about our postal worker, or our grocery store clerk?” or “Can you think of people in our community that might need an extra hand? How about someone who is elderly in a care home, or a person who might not have enough to eat?” Getting children to think about others in the world, be it, people, they know or don’t know, and ideas of how to say thank you or how to help others and give back is a great lesson. We can remind children that we must of course always be safe and only go out to help our community if our parents are with us and we have their permission. From this discussion, make a list of ideas of people we want to thank or people we can help. From there, decide what activity you can do as a family to say thank you or give back to these great people.

Activity: As a family, begin your activity. Create, act, have fun! Here are some great ideas for ways to say thank you and give back:

- Create a card of thanks with a poem or nice phrases, for an extended family member.
- Visit a local care home for the elderly and spend time saying hello to the residents (you will need permission from the facility to do this.)
- Create a list of songs to sing and visit your neighbor and sing for them in their front yard!
- Choose a part of your neighborhood, or a local park and (practicing safe handling of garbage) work together and clean up the area from litter.
- Work together as a family and bake some delicious treats and deliver them to a service worker in your community to say thank you.
Remember that parents will need to take care of the cutting and use of the stove or oven. As well, check to see if the person you are baking for has any allergies and be sensitive to that.
- Offer to volunteer at a local animal shelter as a family.
- Go through old toys and clothes and donate items to a local clothing donation center.
- Organize a sports game for all your neighbors and their families, have everyone join on a certain day and play for fun with family teams!

Next steps: We encourage families to be creative together! Creativity allows us to express our feelings, let out our emotions, all while creating something wonderful! We can also use our creativity to make these wonderful works of art for others as a gift. Celebrating our communities, saying thank you and giving back is a great way to build self-esteem and to help shape our children to become kind, compassionate people.

“Let’s laugh, smile and sing!” Silly songs and happy thoughts exercise.

Instructions: Parent and child/ren can stand and do actions for the songs, getting up and moving about will encourage exercise while we are singing. For the game exercise ‘funny stories’, have everyone playing sit in a circle, this exercise is best when there are at least 3 people or more, but it can be done with two people as well.

Materials: None needed.

Discussion: It’s important to smile and laugh every day, and, it is good for our mental health to sing every day as well! Smiling, laughing and singing release feel-good neurotransmitters called dopamine, endorphins, and serotonin. Talk to your child about this, explaining to them that when we make the effort to smile, laugh and sing it helps us be happy in so many ways. Another way to get our feel-good neurotransmitters going is to get up and get moving! Any type of exercise is a great way to help us feel great too! Even if we are feeling blue, we can watch a funny movie, sing a fun song or just smile a big smile and it will start to help us feel better!

Song: You can learn this song along with your child/ren along with the actions. It is sung to the tune ‘Row, row, row your boat’. The actions are in (brackets.)

- Hug, hug, hug your love, hug them soft and near (hug your child,)
- Hug them gently till they smile then tickle them on their ears (tickle their ears.)
- Hug, hug, hug your love, hug them soft and close (hug your child,)
- Hug them gently till they smile then kiss them on their nose (kiss them on their nose.)
- Hug, hug, hug your love, hug them soft and sweet (hug your child,)
- Hug them gently till they smile then tickle them on their feet (tickle their feet.)

Song: To the tune of 'The Itsy, bitsy spider'.

I'm a special person, there's only one of me (march on the spot and then point to ones' self)

- I can do lots of things like jump and climb a tree (jump up and down and then pretend you are climbing)
- I'm kind and I'm smart and I like to spin around (spin three times in a circle,)
- But most of all I like to laugh until I fall down! (Do a huge belly laugh and fall to the ground laughing!)

Game exercise "Funny stories": In this exercise, everyone will work together to tell funny stories. Beginning with the youngest person in the game they will start the story with "Once upon a time," and add just a few words to this phrase, starting the story off. In a clockwise direction, each person will have a turn to 'add to the story'. Each time someone adds, they are only to say one sentence and try to leave the sentence off with a great platform for the next person. For example, the first person may say "Once upon a time there was a bear named..." then the next player may say "Mr. Big, who was so big he couldn't fit in his house that was made of..." And the next person may add "apples, so he crushed the apples and they all fell down and made applesauce which he ate. He thought it tasted..." And so on. The goal of the game is to keep the story as funny as you can! After going around having a couple of turns, the last person can end the story with a funny ending. This game always gets families laughing and is a great way to boost our moods and allow us to bond! See how many funny stories you can make up as a family!

Next steps: Keep the smiling, laughing, singing and movement going in your household! Think of new ways to exercise as a family, make up some silly songs together, encourage each other to smile simply by smiling at one other!

“Let’s go!” Discussion and chart for goals and achievements.

Instructions: This discussion is best done at a workstation such as a table since there will be some writing done on the chart that is included. You can print the chart or create your own.

Materials: You will need a pencil and some stickers. The stickers will be used over time as children complete goals, it is best to use a sticker that will fit in the spaces on the chart. A fun colorful sticker is suggested.

Discussion: Setting simple goals and achieving them will help children build self-esteem. Discuss with your child/ren about what goals they want to set for themselves. Keep things simple. You can use the chart below to record their goals and once achieved you can place a sticker in the box beside the goal. Examples might be Finishing a task, learning something new or trying new food. Keep the goals attainable within one to two weeks, so that children do not lose interest. For younger children, even setting a goal to complete within one or two days is best.

Next steps and Chart: You can reprint this chart and create new ones as often as needed. If your child finds they cannot achieve a goal, or they are having a challenging time trying to achieve it, discuss ways to change the goal so that it is more achievable. For example, their goal may have been to learn how to ride their bike within one week, but after one week they still have not learned to ride the bike. Perhaps they haven’t had enough time to work on this goal, so, the goal could be changed to a new goal. Instead, the new goal could be that they will *practice* riding their bike three times each week. Discuss solutions and create new goals or new ways to reach the goals. We want the goals chart to help kids feel great about themselves!

See the chart below:

My Goals Chart



| My GOALS | MY ACHIEVEMENTS |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |



“I’m important!” Activity for self-esteem building.

Instructions: It is best to do this activity at a workstation such as a table.

Materials: Parents will need to pre-prepare this activity by cutting out a 10 x 10 inch (approx..) in diameter circle made from thick paper, one that will stand up to glue and paint. You will also need art materials such as glue, magazine or picture cut-outs to go with the theme, mediums such as pencil crayons, markers, crayons and paint, and any other materials that you and your child/ren choose to use. You will also need a piece of plain paper and a pencil or pen to write down your list of “I’m important” points. Finally, you will need a picture of your child that can be glued to their artwork, approximately 4 x 4 inches in diameter to fit in the center of the circle cut out.

Discussion: When children feel important it helps build their self-esteem. Knowing that they are needed and an important part of their family, their home, their community, their country, and their planet will help them feel valued. In this discussion guide children to understand that when we do our part, be it in our home, our community or on our planet, we contribute something good and therefore we make a difference. We all have a purpose and by giving back to these things we are accomplishing that purpose. This is a great reason to feel good about ourselves! Discuss ways with your child/ren that they can give back and help take care of these things. Write down a list for each thing including our home, our family, our community, our school, our planet, and any others you may think of. Ask your child things like; “How are you important in our family?” Answers might be such things as; “You bring your family happiness, joy, and love.” Or, you may ask; “How are you a helper in our home?” An answer might be “You help with chores and cooking healthy meals.” From taking care of pets to recycling, being a good friend at school, to not littering, we take care of the planet, it’s creatures and ourselves because we matter, and we have a purpose!

Art activity: After you have created an “I’m important” list with your child/ren, it's time to take this list and use it to create your art piece. The circle paper cut out will act as our planet Earth. First, make an approximate 4 x 4 inch in diameter circle drawing with a pencil, in the center of the circle/Earth. In this circle you can glue the picture of your child. Now, use a pencil to lightly draw in the other parts of the Earth, keeping it simple, design spots for both the land and the water. Now on the Earth have your child draw different pictures representing the different things they have on their list. For example, they may have listed ‘animals, or pets’ as one of the things on the list that they can help take care of. To represent these, they can draw a picture of their family pet, as well as other animals of the Earth. Other ideas might be to draw their family, their friends, and their school. Children can use picture cut-outs instead of drawings, or, use both! Be as creative as you can be!

Next steps: Placing this art piece in a place where your child can see it will remind them of their importance in the world. No matter how young, or how small, we can make a difference. Telling children this often will help them feel important and empowered.

"I am safe, I am loved" Nighttime calmness activity and prayer.

Instructions: This discussion, prayer, and activity best take place just before your child/ren go to bed. The calmness activity can take place while they are getting ready for bed while brushing their teeth for example. The nighttime prayer and meditation are best for when they are already in bed and ready to go to sleep.

Materials: None needed.

Calmness activity: A lovely way to finish a day is to reflect on what our day gave us. Thinking of things, we are grateful for from our day will help calm the mind and body. A great tool for before bedtime! Ask your child these three things to reiterate positive thinking, gratefulness and self-love; 1) "What was your favorite part of your day?" 2) "Can you name something you are thankful and grateful for?" and finally 3) Tell me something you did today that was really great (or) Tell me something really great about you."

Nighttime prayer: As your child/ren is/are ready to sleep, you can read this prayer to them, you can add your own phrases to it...

My dear child...

You are so important to me, to our family, to this world.

You are loved, you are safe, and I am here for you and I will always love you.

You can always talk to me and come to me whenever you need me.

You can do wonderful things, you have so many talents and strengths.

You are beautiful and brilliant, and you can do anything you put your mind to.

There is only one you in this whole world, and all is well in your world.

God made you and you are a perfect creation, perfect just as you are right now.

God made you, and God makes wonderful things.

We thank you, God, for all our blessings, our health, our family, our friends, our home, our world.

And I (the parent) thank you God for my child, my beautiful present from Heaven.

Meditation: Having your child close their eyes, you can quietly guide them on a calming meditation. This is a 'story meditation'. Use a peaceful and happy theme, one that will best suit them. Tell them to 'imagine' the story, as you tell it, keep the story simple, ask them to 'listen only' as you tell the story to them. Visualizing the story will help them focus on this peaceful scenario and will help calm them. Tell the story as if they are visiting a special place, noticing sights and sounds, and feeling it's a calming atmosphere. Here are some meditation story themes to choose from:

- You are walking through a magical forest filled with fairies, glittering trees, colorful birds and beautiful butterflies...
- You are walking through a field of grass and flowers. It is a sunny, spring day, filled with soaring birds and puffy white clouds. You notice little creatures running in the field, like bunnies and squirrels...
- You are walking along a sandy beach, covered with beautiful seashells and starfish. The water is blue and warm, and you like the feel of the sand between your toes...

Final notes:

We hope that these programs have been educational, inspirational, helpful and fun for your child and your family. We encourage you to use them again and again, to build lasting memories and to help your child feel great about themselves. Thank you for letting us be a part of your family for this time.

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