



Reducing Parent's Stress Increases Children's Self Esteem

Here's some vital news for parents who are stressed

Everyone knows that healthy self-esteem is crucial to a child's sense of value and self-worth. What is less well known is the fact that high stress in parents is associated with lower levels of their kid's self-esteem.

This finding is not surprising as research around the world reveals that styles of parenting are associated with children and adolescent depression. The gong (poor quality performance) goes to the "authoritarian" style of parenting (rigid rules enforced with harshness) while parental warmth and support is associated with higher levels of well-being.

Parenting research also indicates that stressful life events and daily parenting hassles can lead to negative emotions and problem behaviors in pre-school-age children. Different links have been found between parent stress and children's problems. Here's one: child behavioural issue links to dad or mum becoming stressed leads to weaker parent-child interactions leads to child having mood and further behavioural issues.

Here's the great news! In a study of a group of primary-age children and their mums identified as highly stressed, parenting skills training resulted in higher self-esteem levels in the kids – and less parent stress.

Sessions in parenting skills included:

- how to encourage children through positive reinforcement
- how to set limits on kids' behaviour
- sharing decision-making with kids
- self-managing strong emotions through positive self-talk and relaxation
- respecting feelings

After eight sessions for the mums, results revealed that the self-esteem level of children increased significantly – and parent stress was lowered.

KEY FINDINGS

- Learning effective parenting skills can significantly decrease your stress
- Harsh or inconsistent discipline and high stress levels in parents was associated with increased anxiety and decreased self-esteem in kids
- Through participating in a parent education program, mothers had an increased confidence in their problem-solving abilities and their ability to regulate their emotional distress



THINGS YOU CAN DO

- ✓ Make the most of available parenting resources
- ✓ Read up on tips, skills and strategies for effective parenting
- ✓ Commit to helping your child avoid problems associated with low self-esteem such as apathy and aggression
- ✓ Seek help if needed: talk out problems, work on ways to release negative emotions
- ✓ Eat well, exercise, rest, and enjoy interacting with your kids
- ✓ Don't be the boss of your children all the time
- ✓ Don't sweat the small stuff – have a laugh

TAKEAWAY

FROM PROFESSOR MICHAEL BERNARD
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
FOUNDER, YOU CAN DO IT! EDUCATION

Ineffective parenting skills can significantly impact on the self-esteem of both parents and kids.

Parent education is very important – especially for parents who are highly stressed. Learning the basics of stress management, discipline and how to develop children's independence has a big impact on the relationship between parent and child.