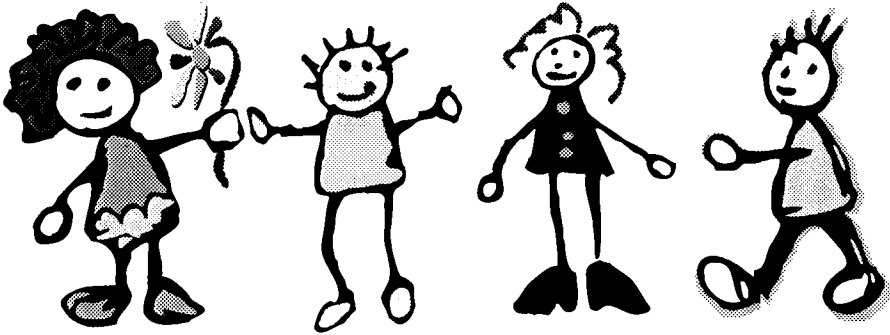


CHILDREN AND SELF-ESTEEM



The Self Esteem of Children — Creating Tomorrow Today

Kay Kay

As we approach the year 2000 our thoughts are turning to how society might look in the new millennium. It seems obvious that the quality of our future will very much depend upon the quality of the people living it. As children are our future, then the development of their self-esteem is crucial, not only to them as individuals but to society in general. How they learn to feel about themselves today will largely determine what kind of future that will be.

We are all shareholders in society's children, but how often do we question ourselves about how we influence the young in our care to behave the way they do? What windows on the world do we

provide for them? What concepts of themselves, others and society do we feed to them?

To each interaction with children we adults bring our whole selves, warts and all, seen and unseen. We bring all our own childhood and those of past generations. We consciously and unconsciously model behaviour for them and much of the time we pass on our perceptions and beliefs as law.

A great deal of work is being done to increase awareness and to support more conscious approaches to adult-child interaction. More holistic approaches to education are being advocated which actively encourage and demonstrate the

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benefits of the development of self-esteem in children. We need to consider the curriculum in the light of what will prepare youngsters for a rapidly changing world and to encourage their enjoyment in life-long learning. The Myers-Briggs Jungian type identification is one of many methods available to assist teachers in helping their pupils to learn in the manner most beneficial to the child.

There is now more of an appreciation of the difficulties and pitfalls of parenting. A number of projects and programmes exist such as the Parent Network, which provide ways in which

parents can develop their skills and find mutual support.

In increasing numbers people are now consciously working to change their old unsupportive behavioural patterns, to free themselves of old restrictive injunctions and to find the path to happiness and self-fulfilment. Being honest about how we feel about ourselves and our own upbringing can create in us more awareness in our approach to the children in our care.

Making the development of high self-esteem in children a priority in our society might be the most cost effective investment in the future we could make.

Building Self-esteem in Children: The Parent Perspective

Tim Kahn

We all know that parents, who are a child's first teachers, are central in determining the level of their children's self-esteem, and that the parents' own level of self-esteem markedly affects that of their children. Let me illustrate this with a story. As a child Jane remembers constant criticism from her parents. 'My parents had good intentions. They pointed out my mistakes and the error of my ways so that I could learn from them. But I ended up feeling I was no good.' She adds, 'I vowed to be

different with my own children.'

Jane's daughter, Sophie, is ten. 'I made a point of praising Sophie, not criticising her, but now her school tells me that she only does her work if her teacher praises her. Sophie needs to be told from the outside how able she is — she has no inner concept of her ability.' Despite outwardly changing the way she relates to her daughter, Jane has unwittingly passed on her own low self-esteem. There is a different surface appearance but the underlying

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