



The Self and Identity: 5 Ways to Encourage Your Child's Individuality

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As a parent, sometimes we want our children to be just like us. While it's never a problem to share with your child your beliefs and values, it's also important to teach children how to be an individual. Your little learner is a child today, but is tomorrow's citizen, voter, and game-changer. Why not teach them when they're young to celebrate their individuality?

Here are 5 important ways to help your child build a healthy identity:

Give them a challenge



One of the hardest tasks that teenagers face during adolescence is simply figuring out who they are and what they want to become. There's no reason why kids can't begin to learn about their interests, strengths, and weaknesses when they're young.

Challenge your child to find what makes them tick. Encourage them to explore different subjects and topics, and don't disallow something just because you might not be interested in it. Once you find where your child's interests lie, give them the opportunity to learn more, exploring their favorite topics with different experiences.

Earning and learning vs. "You're so smart!"



Teach them that earning and learning is more important than the natural gifts they were born with. Many times, teachers or parents will get trapped into praising kids with the usual, “you’re so smart!” While it’s important to praise a job well done, “being smart” isn’t always about the intelligence that we’re born with.

More importantly, what makes the difference in learning and achievement is good old fashioned hard work. Teaching your child to develop a strong work ethic is paramount to their success regardless of their IQ. This helps kids build important character traits, while exploring their potential for success, fueling their interests.

Take their interests to a new level



Does your little one love to sing or dance? Maybe they like to draw and paint. There's no better time to start your child with dance or music lessons than when they're young. Give your kids the opportunity to put into practice their favorite interests, and you will see them blossom into young musicians, artists, or football players.

Furthermore, take their academic interests to new heights, finding out what subjects they love. An easy way to find out what subjects your little scholars enjoy is to provide them with preschool learning games, even before they get to school. Find an [educational learning app for kids](#) that can help you pin down what your child likes, and foster a love for those skills.

Teach them to be assertive



One way to avoid self-esteem issues later on in life is to make sure your child knows how to stand up for themselves. This involves supporting their interests and pursuits, while teaching them to express who they are without feeling bad about it. Teach them that it's okay to be different from others, and to follow their own dreams, no matter what other kids think or say about it.

Sometimes kids are afraid to get to school only to be labeled as a "nerd", but kids need to learn from an early age that knowledge is power. It's great to be different and to express ourselves through our interests. By teaching assertiveness, your child will learn to express themselves without much worry how others perceive them.

Don't protect too much



It's only natural that we want to protect our kids. But sometimes when we go overboard, we end up taking away valuable, teachable moments. Kids need to learn that success is usually found only after a good deal of hard work, multiple attempts, and oftentimes failure.

When kids learn to use failures to achieve success, they will build motivation and the desire to pursue their goals. This will help them to develop persistence and determination, allowing them to follow their dreams. In turn, children will grow into adulthood with a healthy sense of self-respect for doing the things they love.

...and help them live the live they dream

There are many ways to build a sense of individuality within a child, but the best ways are those that also teach them to respect themselves and their interests, while building healthy character traits to help them navigate through their lives. It's never too early to teach kids to follow their dreams and find their passions, and with the above steps, you can be confident that you are teaching your little one to find their passions and live the life they dream!