

## How to Build Your Child's Confidence

We all know as adults that confidence is important. If *you* don't believe in yourself, why would anyone else? Confidence is essential to success in life. It is also often self-fulfilling. So when is the right time to teach our children to be confident, and how do we do it?

### **Be Prepared**

One of the best ways to give your child confidence is through preparation. If you are prepared for a situation, you can be more confident in your success. Before your child enters Kindergarten, it is a good idea to prepare them for the challenges ahead. Studies have shown that those children who enter Kindergarten with some knowledge of Math, are more likely to be successful in Math in Grade Five. Therefore Kindergarten Preparation is likely to lead to long term gains. Why? It may come down to little more than confidence. By starting off well in Kindergarten, students gain confidence, and thereby motivation. As a result they are more successful and thereby more confident! This is a virtuous cycle we should encourage for all our children.

### **Be Positive**

Despite our efforts to ensure that our kids are prepared, sometimes their confidence will be shaken. For instance many kids will not learn to read as quickly as their peers. They may still be sounding words out one by one as their peers begin to read more fluently and easily, and it's likely that their slower reading will be pointed out to them. To continue to learn reading, they need to continue sounding out. Yet they are now self-aware that by sounding out each word, they are advertising to their peers that they cannot read well. This often leads to a complete shutdown in their learning process, and the creation of a negative cycle. Students lose confidence in their abilities, become demotivated, and no longer like to learn reading. Such a cycle is very self-fulfilling and needs to be overcome before learning can restart. A positive intervention can dismantle this cycle and re-establish the natural joy for learning.

## **Individualize Learning - At the Right Level**

Group learning is not as effective in creating confidence among students. The lesson will be too easy for some, who will switch off and possibly lose out on learning some valuable materials. Conversely it will be too difficult for others, and more damagingly, frustrate them. Frustration undermines confidence, motivation, and ability. As a result, most group lessons are targeted towards the lowest denominator in the class as it seems less damaging to under-challenge students than to over-challenge them. Many bright students thereby waste a lot of time at school.

## **Building an Independent Ability to Learn**

Independence is a great means to confidence. If you can do something on your own, without anyone's help, you can be proud and self-confident. Every student who can read on their own can teach themselves almost anything. We live in a world where answers are now immediately available at the touch of your fingers, or in the case of smartphones, at your literal beck and call. There is a "For Dummies" book for almost any topic. We want our children to be able to figure things out on their own, without our help. This will increase their confidence, and ultimately their happiness in life.

The Learning Path addresses many of these areas directly, going out of its way to build confidence, motivation, and thereby ability in children. We do so in way that fosters an ability to learn independently. Our centers address these areas directly:

- 1) Preparation - our programs are meant to prepare children for Kindergarten and success in Elementary & Middle School.
- 2) Positive - we seek to build virtuous learning cycles where children find their confidence, which leads to greater motivation and ability.
- 3) Individualized Learning - our programs are individualized to each and every child. For older children we create maps through adaptive computer testing that allow us to fill in individual holes and advance students beyond grade level, at just the right pace for them.

4) Independent Learning - we embrace a philosophy that encourages children to learn from failure, and move forward with confidence. Making mistakes is an opportunity to learn and improve. Those of us who aren't making mistakes, simply aren't pushing ourselves.

