

DISCOURAGEMENT

Children experience discouragement in many different forms

Part of growing up and growing away from you means that children meet with many people who can be discouraging or negative toward them. Nitpickers, fault-finders and verbal bullies can be found in any playground. They exist in many families too.

Some kids have teflon-coated hides and can easily brush off criticism or discouragement. Most children, like adults, can be stung by discouragement. Receive enough of it and their self-esteem takes a dive and they begin to take fewer risks for fear of being criticised for making mistakes.

HELP CHILDREN HANDLE DISCOURAGEMENT

AS A PARENT YOU CAN HELP CHILDREN DEAL WITH DISCOURAGING OR DISPARAGING EXPERIENCES AND REMARKS. HERE ARE FIVE IDEAS THAT MAY HELP YOU HELP CHILDREN DEAL WITH DISCOURAGEMENT:

1. Tell your children they don't have to agree! If you are told often enough that you are inadequate in some way then it is hard not to agree with the assessment. Children can disagree quietly with a discouraging statement. It is a matter of being aware of their self-talk. When on the

receiving end of discouragement they can say something like, "Nuh, I don't agree with that. I am a smart kid." Positive self-talk can help deflect criticism and lessen the personal hurt.

2. Show you understand how they feel. Let them know that you know what it is like to be put down or discouraged. Children are able to draw strength when they know that their parents generally know how they feel about a situation. Above all let children know that they will survive put downs and criticism and that things will get better. They always do.

3. Talk about the source of the discouragement so that children gain perspective. Children often lose perspective so a reality check can help them realise that the sun will rise tomorrow or that the discouraging person really needs help. Let them know that they shouldn't take put downs personally. In effect, the problem lies with the discourager.

4. Give them some social skills needed to cope. Some children are hard to ruffle with criticism. Their

body language and verbal response is such that they deflect any criticism. Sometimes giving kids suitable comeback lines can help them deal with the criticism or discouragement they experience. Or even strong body language can help lessen the verbal stings.

5. Provide plenty of encouragement yourself. The encouragement that a parent gives has a snowball effect that helps children deal with all sorts of difficulties. The constant encouragement and strong sense of belief by a significant adult (i.e. a parent or grandparent) can have an amazing effect on a child. It helps insulate them against negative stuff.



Parenting *ideas*
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