

# PARENT RESOURCE GUIDE

HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS WITH  
SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN



## **Hello Parent or Guardian,**

Having school-aged children can be tough, especially when you do not know how to help them cope with big feelings or difficult situations. We have put together this packet of helpful resources to help you understand, manage, and provide additional support for your child when there are difficult decisions, unwanted behaviors, big emotions, and unforeseen circumstances.

Please know that you are not alone and there are additional resources and support for you and your child. If you would like to speak to a Behavioral Health Specialist or schedule an appointment, please call one of the Family Medical Center phone numbers below.

Sincerely,

**Family Medical Center of Michigan**



- FMC School-Based services in Monroe Co:  
**734-347-2048**
- FMC Offices in Temperance, Carleton & Monroe:  
**734-654-2169**
- FMC School-Based services in Lenawee Co:  
**517-438-0065**
- FMC Office in Adrian:  
**517-263-1800**
- FMC School-Based services and Office in Wayne County:  
**313-969-3812**

# 25 WAYS TO ENCOURAGE

Thank you for helping with...

It makes mornings/dinner/outings easier when you.... thank you.

I really appreciate it when you...

Thank you for doing that... it means I/we can now...

We did it together!

Wow! You made a building/drawing/etc.

You did it on your own!

You did x and then y and worked it out.

You used lots of red paint/blocks/tape/etc.

You made it really big/small/colorful/complicated/etc.

That took you a long time, and you did it!

How did you do that?

You did x, what will you do now?

Can you tell me about it?

What is your favorite part?

How did you think of that?

I really enjoy doing this with you.

I love watching you create/help your sister/play soccer/ etc.

I'm so proud to be your mum, every day, no matter what.

Look how happy your friend is when you share/help/smile/etc.

You kept going, even when it was hard.

You look so pleased to have done that!

You made x feel so pleased when you did that.

It makes you feel good when you do x.

Say nothing - just smile.

Children require positive affirmations to develop a healthy self-esteem. Here is a list of 64 positive statements you can say to your children to help boost their self-esteem and self-confidence

**YOU ARE LOVED.**  
You make me smile.  
I think about you when we're apart.  
I will do my best to keep you safe.  
Sometimes I will say no. I have faith in you. I know you can handle it.  
You are creative. Trust your instincts. Your ideas are worthwhile.

You are learning. You are growing. Growing is hard work.  
I believe you. I believe in you.

Your body is your own. You have say over your body.  
You are important. Your ideas matter. You are able to do work that matters.  
I see you working learning every day.  
You make a difference in my life.

Your ideas are interesting. You've made me think of things in a **COMPLETELY NEW WAY.**  
I'm excited to see what you do.  
Thanks for helping me.  
Thank you for contributing to our family.  
I enjoy your company.  
It's **FUN** to do things with you.  
I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE.

You are **CAPABLE.** You are **DESERVING.**  
You are **STRONG.** You can say no. Your choices matter.  
You make a difference.

**positive THINGS to SAY TO kids**

Your words are powerful. Your actions are powerful. Your emotions may be powerful. And you can still choose your actions. You are more than your emotions.  
You are a good friend. You are kind.  
You don't have to like what someone is saying in order to treat them with respect. Someone else's poor behavior is not an excuse for your own.  
You are imperfect. So am I.  
You can change your mind. You can learn from your mistakes. You can ask for help.

You are valuable. You are interesting. You are beautiful. When you make a mistake you are still beautiful.

I am curious what you **THINK.** How did you do that?

MY WORLD IS BETTER with you in it.  
You make me **SMILE.**  
I LOVE YOU.

I'm happy to talk with you. I'm ready to listen. I'm listening.  
I'm proud of you.  
I'm grateful you're in my life.

*Alissa Marquess CreativeWithKids.com®*

When children feel big emotions, sometimes it is hard to find things to help them cope with these feelings. Here is a list of potential coping skills and things they can try when they are feeling overwhelmed

# The **BIG** COPING SKILLS LIST

- |                              |                               |                                      |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Use positive self-talk       | Eat a healthy meal            | Host a dinner party                  |
| Do deep breathing            | Watch your favorite TV show   | Do your homework                     |
| Watch your favorite movie    | Do a word search              | Think of your strengths              |
| Take a shower                | Write a short story           | Talk in a funny voice                |
| Go for a walk                | Play your favorite sport      | Volunteer your time                  |
| Talk to a counselor          | Take a nap if you need it     | Have a picnic                        |
| Laugh                        | Do a crossword puzzle         | Rearrange your room                  |
| Paint or draw                | Play a game outside           | Call a relative                      |
| Exercise                     | Cook or bake with a parent    | Meet someone new                     |
| Play with your pet           | Ask for a hug                 | Create an action plan                |
| Go for a jog                 | Set a goal                    | Draw a comic                         |
| Talk to a friend             | Think of your favorite memory | Talk to your pet                     |
| Play a video game            | Dance                         | Read a positive quote                |
| Hang out with friends        | Go for a bike ride            | Write your feelings in a journal     |
| Listen to your favorite song | Go to the park                | Pick out an outfit for tomorrow      |
| Take a time out              | Stretch or do yoga            | Try to make your sibling laugh       |
| Think of something funny     | Clean your room               | Try to make your parents laugh       |
| Play with your favorite toy  | Do something kind             | Walk the dog                         |
| Use an I-Feel message        | Smile until you feel better   | Create jewelry                       |
| Count to 10                  | Think of the consequences     | Write your own song                  |
| Spend time with family       | Learn a new skill             | Play a board or card game            |
| Go for a hike                | Listen to calming music       | Play on your phone                   |
| Flip through a magazine      |                               | Answer a "Would You Rather" question |
| Visit somewhere new          |                               | Sing                                 |
| Face your problem            |                               | Read this <b>whole</b> list!         |



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When things get out of hand, it can be hard to calm down or maintain a helpful mindset. These de-escalation strategies may be helpful when there is a misunderstanding or conflict that needs resolved.

## De-escalation Strategies & Techniques

1. Act calm even if you're not.
2. Say, "Let's talk about this later".
3. Use humor to lighten to mood.
4. Lower your voice.
5. Give a choice.
6. Walk away.
7. Ask, "What would help you right now?"
8. Change the subject to a positive one.
9. Give personal space.
10. Say, "I see where you are coming from."
11. Distract with a photo of something they like.
12. Show that you are listening.
13. Remove the audience.
14. Say, "I want to help you."
15. Talk about something they like.
16. Make a joke.
17. Encourage the person.
18. Remind them of something amazing they did.
19. Say, "You can do this."
20. Call another adult for help.
21. Say, "Let's call... I think they can help."
22. Be willing to find a solution.
23. Offer to change the way you are doing something.
24. Re-state what the person is saying.
25. Validate their thoughts.
26. Avoid over-reacting.
27. Use active listening.
28. Offer a solution.
29. Let the person talk without interrupting.
30. Say, "I see your point."
31. Offer to take a walk with the person.
32. Clarify expectations.
33. Remind them of something they love.
34. Apologize for something you did wrong or the way it was taken.
35. Invite them to do a preferred activity.
36. Ask if they can explain more about how they're feeling.
37. Try to understand the person's perspective.
38. Slow yourself down to avoid getting worked up.
39. Say, "So, you're upset because... right?"
40. Don't say "calm down".
41. Show empathy.
42. Encourage the person to use a coping strategy.
43. Don't take items or personal property from them.
44. Encourage the person to take a walk or get a drink.
45. Give the person an "out" (i.e. letting them go to another room or walking away).
46. Ask, "Would it help if... ?"
47. Keep escape routes open to the door.
48. Coach the person with positive remarks.
49. Acknowledge where you agree with the person.
50. Remind the person, "You're not in trouble".
51. Tell the person, "I'm here for you."
52. Say, "Talk to me," and listen.
53. Tell the person to take a minute to themselves.
54. Ignore the behavior.
55. Distract by saying, "Hey, let's go..."
56. Be respectful in your tone.
57. "Do what works" in the moment.
58. Spend time de-briefing after the incident to identify ways to improve.
59. Ask them to draw a picture of what happened.
60. Avoid needing to get the last word.

Bullying is a huge theme for school-aged children, whether it is elementary, middle, or high school. Children should be aware of different types of bullying as well as how and when to share their treatment by others with an adult.

# TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying is when someone does mean or hurtful things to another person on purpose.



**Physical Bullying** is when a person uses their body or an object to hurt another person.



**Verbal Bullying** is when someone uses spoken or written words to hurt another person's feelings.



**Social Bullying** is when someone hurts another person's feelings by making other people think badly about them.



**Cyber Bullying** is when someone uses a phone, computer, or other electronic device as a way to say or do mean things to someone else.



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Uncertain times and uncertain circumstances will arise, and it is important to be able to communicate with children in a way that they might understand

things to say  
WHEN OUR KIDS FEEL ANXIOUS & SCARED  
(and we are uncertain, too)

We don't know what will happen or when this will end. But this won't last forever.

What questions do you have?  
What are you wondering about?

This is really hard right now. But I also know that we can deal with this and get through this together.

I am here and I've got your back, sweetheart.

It's totally normal to feel worried, sad, disappointed, or even angry in situations like this. Let's see how we can take good, kind care of your feelings.

Even though we don't have all the answers right now, when we know more, I will let you know, too.

We will take it one step at a time and focus on what we do have control over, like doing things that help us to stay safe, taking care of ourselves, and being gentle, forgiving, and kind with each other.



Understanding different forms of communication can help adjust our speaking style to better share our feelings or concerns

## FORMS OF

# COMMUNICATION



### ASSERTIVE

You tell someone how they made you feel in a nice and respectful way.

**EXAMPLE:** SOMEONE CALLS YOU A NAME. YOU TELL THAT PERSON THAT IT HURT YOUR FEELINGS WHEN THEY DID THAT AND YOU WOULD LIKE FOR THEM TO PLEASE STOP.

### PASSIVE

You don't share your feelings with anyone and you pretend that everything is okay.

**EXAMPLE:** SOMEONE CALLS YOU A NAME. YOU PRETEND THAT IT DOESN'T BOTHER YOU AND YOU NEVER LET THEM KNOW HOW YOU FEEL.

### AGGRESSIVE

You express your feelings in a mean and disrespectful way.

**EXAMPLE:** SOMEONE CALLS YOU A NAME. YOU CALL THEM AN EVEN WORSE NAME OR YOU GET IN THEIR FACE TO TRY TO SCARE THEM.

### PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE

You don't share your feelings, but then you do something to get back at the other person.

**EXAMPLE:** SOMEONE CALLS YOU A NAME. YOU PRETEND THAT YOU'RE FEELINGS AREN'T HURT, BUT YOU SPREAD RUMORS ABOUT THEM TO THE OTHER KIDS IN SCHOOL.



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Conflict and arguments are difficult for children because they have a harder time identifying feelings, communicating them, and working towards a resolution. Here are some helpful tips to resolve conflict and get a healthy outcome.

## TIPS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT

1. Make sure that you are calm. Use your positive coping skills for anger. Try to identify the other feelings that you're experiencing beside anger so that you can express it to that person.
2. Find the right time to approach the person that you have conflict with. If you can, try to make it a private conversation when they seem like they are ready to listen.
3. Let the other person know from the beginning that the goal of your discussion is to be able to work things out.
4. Communicate assertively and use an I-feel statement to express yourself. Make sure that you are sharing all your feelings.
5. Allow them to respond to you and share their side of the story. Agree with the parts of their story that are correct.
6. Actively listen to them and say things to let them know that you are hearing them.
7. Remain respectful throughout the whole conversation. Don't name call or raise your voice. Once you start doing those things, it makes it harder for the other person to want to hear what you have to say.
8. Be aware that they might not respond the way that you want them to. Many people don't like to be confronted and might become defensive. Stay respectful!
9. Apologize for the role that you played in the conflict and be willing to accept their apologies and forgive them.
10. Offer a solution or compromise to your problem. Ask the other person what they think would be a good solution. Working together, come up with one that you both agree with.



One very helpful tool in counseling is trying to help the child understand their situation and the different parts of it that they can and cannot control. By understanding the parts of their problem that they CAN control, they can spend more time focusing on this versus worrying about the parts they cannot control.

what choices can I make?



# Things I Can Control:



1. My response.
2. Asking for help.
3. How I treat others.
4. Being kind and caring towards others.
5. Being kind and caring towards myself.
6. Working hard.
7. Going to bed on time.
8. Waking up early to get to school on time.
9. Using an I-statement.
10. Saying what I need.
11. Getting exercise.
12. Supporting others.
13. Having a good sense of humor.
14. Forgiving others.
15. Smiling.
16. Apologizing.
17. Being myself.
18. Thinking positively.
19. What I focus on.
20. My goals.
21. My attitude.
22. How I care for myself when I feel sad.
23. How I care for myself when I feel angry.
24. Expressing gratitude and appreciation.
25. Trying to understand someone else's feelings and point of view.
26. Treating others the way I want to be treated.
27. Listening to others.
28. Being truthful and honest.
29. Sharing my feelings.
30. Saying what I want and hope for.
31. How I think about situations.
32. Ignoring annoying behavior.
33. Refusing to spread gossip or rumors.
34. Choosing friends with people who like and accept me.
35. LIKING and LOVING myself
36. Respecting others and myself.
37. Doing my best at school.
38. Using my manners.
39. Cleaning up after myself.
40. Limiting how much time I am in front of screens.
41. Helping others.
42. Taking deep breaths.
43. Being responsible for my words and actions.
44. My hopes and dreams.
45. My effort.
46. Showing others I care about them.
47. Respecting the personal space of others.
48. How I talk to people.
49. Having a growth mindset.
50. Saying positive affirmations & reminding myself of my strengths.



Depression and general sadness are feelings that many children and adults experience throughout their lives. It is important to understand the symptoms of depression so you can help intervene.

# WHAT IS...DEPRESSION?

Depression is a disorder that impacts people's mood and makes them feel sad and lonely a lot. Depression makes it really hard for people to have fun or enjoy things that they used to.



## SYMPTOMS

- Feeling sad, guilty, worthless, or hopeless
- Feeling tired all of the time
- Sleeping too much or not enough
- Having trouble focusing
- Not wanting to do fun things
- Eating too much or not enough
- Not liking yourself
- Missing school
- Not wanting to be around other people

DEPRESSION CAN BE CAUSED BY A NUMBER OF THINGS. IT CAN ALSO AFFECT EVERYONE - CHILDREN, TEENS, AND ADULTS ALIKE.

## TREATING DEPRESSION

### MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY

Talking to a therapist about negative thoughts and feelings can be helpful for someone with depression. Therapy is also a place to learn healthy ways of coping with symptoms.

### MEDICATION

Sometimes medication might be helpful. Depression can impact the way that our brain works, and medication can help to fix it and make us happier.

IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU MIGHT BE DEPRESSED, LET A PARENT OR A TRUSTED ADULT KNOW. THEY WILL BE ABLE TO GET YOU THE HELP THAT YOU NEED. **IF YOU EVER HAVE THOUGHTS ABOUT WANTING TO HURT YOURSELF, TELL SOMEONE IMMEDIATELY. IF A FRIEND EVER TELLS YOU THAT THEY MIGHT WANT TO HURT THEMSELVES, TELL AN ADULT IMMEDIATELY.**



There are many different coping strategies that children can try when they experience various feelings; here are some examples.

### I FEEL...

	lonely disappointed sad
	silly excited hyper
	frustrated annoyed angry
	tired sick hungry
	worried anxious scared
	happy calm focused
	shy confused embarrassed
	brave proud hopeful

### I CAN...

- TAKE DEEP  BREATHS
- TREAT MYSELF & OTHERS WITH  KINDNESS
- CREATE ART  OR BUILD  SOMETHING.
- USE POSITIVE  SELF-TALK
-  ASK FOR HELP
-  EXERCISE
- FOCUS  ON THE GOOD
- STRETCH OR  DO YOGA
- BRAINSTORM  SOLUTIONS &  TRY AGAIN
- GET A DRINK OF  WATER
-  TAKE A BREAK
- TALK  OR WRITE  ABOUT IT

It is during school-age that children begin to learn how to socialize with others and what friendship means. Here are some helpful ways to maintain those friendships.

# tips for making & keeping FRIENDS

1. To have good friends you have to be a good friend.

2. The more you know and like yourself, the easier it will be to find friends who treat you the way you wish to be treated.

3. Try to have lots of different kinds of friends. There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all friend.

4. One way to meet new friends is to follow your curiosities, interests, and passions. In other words, do what you like to do and you will likely meet others who share common interests as you.

5. Make friends with people who like and accept you for YOU.

6. Good friends listen to each other, encourage each other, show they are interested in each other, respect one another, and help each other out.

7. Conflict between friends is normal; a good friend will put in the effort to work it out.

8. Refuse to say unkind things about your friends, even when they make a mistake. (Because we all make mistakes sometimes.)

9. If you make a mistake, apologize. If your friend makes a mistake, try to forgive them and move on.

10. Find ways to show your friends that you appreciate and care about them.

Having a growth mindset means that the key to being successful is through learning and personal growth. A fixed mindset is the idea that a person's qualities are fixed and they cannot change. It is important to teach our children to learn how to have a healthy growth mindset.

# growth mindset

## ways to help your child

### TALK ABOUT IT

Talk with your child about his or her day, but guide the discussion by asking questions like:

- Did you make a mistake today? What did you learn?
- What did you do that was difficult today?

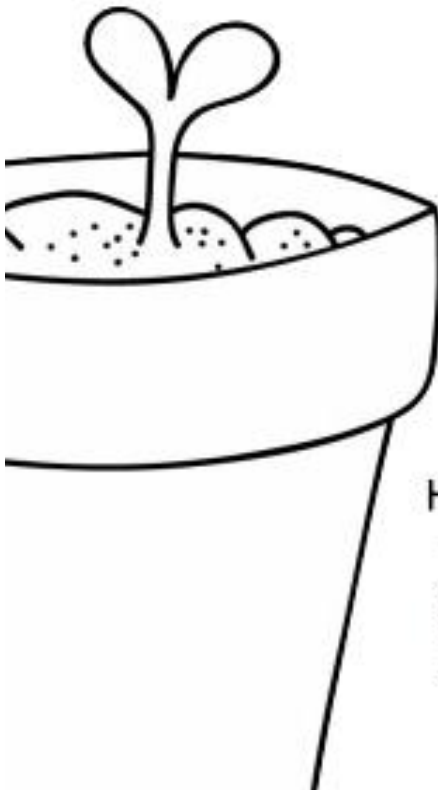
### ENCOURAGE FAILURE (say what?!)

Your child needs to know that failure can (and often does) happen and **it is okay!** Remind her that each time she fails and tries again, her brain is growing stronger! Don't step in to prevent your child's failure - this is how she learns to persevere in the face of challenges.

### PRAISE THE PROCESS

Instead of saying, "You're so smart!" praise effort, goal setting, persisting through challenges, or being creative. You can say something like:

- "Wow! You must have worked really hard on this!"

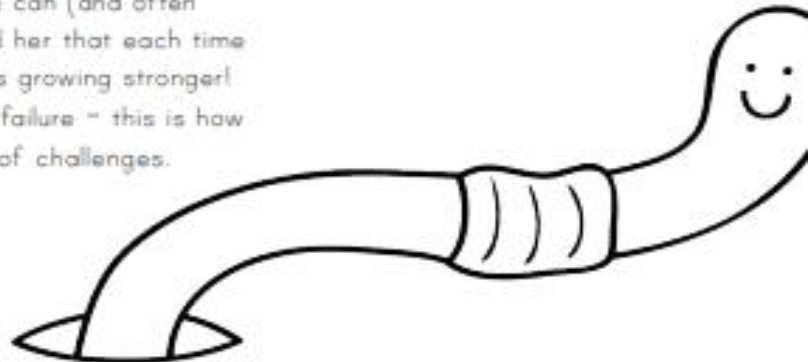


### THE BRAIN CAN GROW!

Remind your child that **his or her intelligence is not fixed.** Remind her that when things are difficult, her brain grows if she persists through the challenge. Each time she learns something new, her brain is making new connections. Your child needs to know this is possible!

### HELP THEM CHANGE THEIR DIALOGUE

The way your child talks to himself makes a huge impact on his mindset. If he says, "This is too hard!" help him change that to "I can't do this yet, but I will keep trying." Give him the words to say when he is feeling defeated by modeling it yourself!



Here are some simple ways to stay connected with your child, even when they may not want to talk about their problems.

When You're Not Sure  
What to Say to Your (Teen) Child,  
But Know that You Want to Stay in Connection  
C H E A T   S H E E T

I'm here to support you. No matter what. Let's figure out a solution.

This is really hard right now. But we can do hard things.

Can you help me understand this better? I am listening.

This boundary is not negotiable, but I still want to hear why you disagree.

I know you are upset. When you're ready to talk, I'm here.

Everyone makes mistakes. Let's take a breather, then brainstorm what to do.



Physical health and healthy habits are crucial to a child's learning and emotional health. Here are some helpful sleep hygiene tips to help your child get enough rest.

# sleep hygiene

## What is Sleep Hygiene?



'Sleep hygiene' is the term used to describe good sleep habits. Considerable research has gone into developing a set of guidelines and tips which are designed to enhance good sleeping, and there is much evidence to suggest that these strategies can provide long-term solutions to sleep difficulties.

There are many medications which are used to treat insomnia, but these tend to be only effective in the short-term. Ongoing use of sleeping pills may lead to dependence and interfere with developing good sleep habits independent of medication, thereby prolonging sleep difficulties. Talk to your health professional about what is right for you, but we recommend good sleep hygiene as an important part of treating insomnia, either with other strategies such as medication or cognitive therapy or alone.

## Sleep Hygiene Tips

- 1) **Get regular.** One of the best ways to train your body to sleep well is to go to bed and get up at more or less the same time every day, even on weekends and days off! This regular rhythm will make you feel better and will give your body something to work from.
- 2) **Sleep when sleepy.** Only try to sleep when you actually feel tired or sleepy, rather than spending too much time awake in bed.
- 3) **Get up & try again.** If you haven't been able to get to sleep after about 20 minutes or more, get up and do something calming or boring until you feel sleepy, then return to bed and try again. Sit quietly on the couch with the lights off (bright light will tell your brain that it is time to wake up), or read something boring like the phone book. Avoid doing anything that is too stimulating or interesting, as this will wake you up even more.
- 4) **Avoid caffeine & nicotine.** It is best to avoid consuming any caffeine (in coffee, tea, cola drinks, chocolate, and some medications) or nicotine (cigarettes) for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. These substances act as stimulants and interfere with the ability to fall asleep.
- 5) **Avoid alcohol.** It is also best to avoid alcohol for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. Many people believe that alcohol is relaxing and helps them to get to sleep at first, but it actually interrupts the quality of sleep.
- 6) **Bed is for sleeping.** Try not to use your bed for anything other than sleeping and sex, so that your body comes to associate bed with sleep. If you use bed as a place to watch TV, eat, read, work on your laptop, pay bills, and other things, your body will not learn this connection.



- 7) **No naps.** It is best to avoid taking naps during the day, to make sure that you are tired at bedtime. If you can't make it through the day without a nap, make sure it is for less than an hour and before 3pm. 
- 8) **Sleep rituals.** You can develop your own rituals of things to remind your body that it is time to sleep - some people find it useful to do relaxing stretches or breathing exercises for 15 minutes before bed each night, or sit calmly with a cup of caffeine-free tea.
- 9) **Bathtime.** Having a hot bath 1-2 hours before bedtime can be useful, as it will raise your body temperature, causing you to feel sleepy as your body temperature drops again. Research shows that sleepiness is associated with a drop in body temperature.
- 10) **No clock-watching.** Many people who struggle with sleep tend to watch the clock too much. Frequently checking the clock during the night can wake you up (especially if you turn on the light to read the time) and reinforces negative thoughts such as "Oh no, look how late it is, I'll never get to sleep" or "it's so early, I have only slept for 5 hours, this is terrible."
- 11) **Use a sleep diary.** This worksheet can be a useful way of making sure you have the right facts about your sleep, rather than making assumptions. Because a diary involves watching the clock (see point 10) it is a good idea to only use it for two weeks to get an idea of what is going and then perhaps two months down the track to see how you are progressing. 
- 12) **Exercise.** Regular exercise is a good idea to help with good sleep, but try not to do strenuous exercise in the 4 hours before bedtime. Morning walks are a great way to start the day feeling refreshed!
- 13) **Eat right.** A healthy, balanced diet will help you to sleep well, but timing is important. Some people find that a very empty stomach at bedtime is distracting, so it can be useful to have a light snack, but a heavy meal soon before bed can also interrupt sleep. Some people recommend a warm glass of milk, which contains tryptophan, which acts as a natural sleep inducer.
- 14) **The right space.** It is very important that your bed and bedroom are quiet and comfortable for sleeping. A cooler room with enough blankets to stay warm is best, and make sure you have curtains or an eyemask to block out early morning light and earplugs if there is noise outside your room.
- 15) **Keep daytime routine the same.** Even if you have a bad night sleep and are tired it is important that you try to keep your daytime activities the same as you had planned. That is, don't avoid activities because you feel tired. This can reinforce the insomnia.

Building relationships is a healthy part of growing up and is something we are constantly doing; these questions make great table talk with your children.

## QUESTIONS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

1. What three words best describe you?
2. What things would a good friend say about you?
3. Where did you grow up? Tell me about it.
4. What is your family like?
5. What is a special memory you have with your family?
6. What are five compliments you would give yourself?
7. What makes you unique?
8. What is something interesting about you that most people don't know?
9. What talents or special abilities do you have? Tell me about them.
10. If you were a superhero, what would your name and special powers be?
11. If you were a color, what would you be and why?
12. What is something that people sometimes misunderstand about you?
13. What's your favorite animal?
14. If you could change one thing about yourself what would it be? Why?
15. If you could eat lunch with anyone, living or deceased, who would it be and why?
16. Who is someone important in your life?
17. What's your favorite sport to play?
18. What's your favorite sport to watch?
19. Would you rather play sports or watch them?
20. If you could add an extra class, what would it be and why?
21. What do you want to do when you're older?
22. What do you hope to be like in 10 years?
23. What do you think your best quality is?
24. What is something that always makes you laugh?
25. Who is someone who can always cheer you up?
26. If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
27. Do you have an animal? Tell me about him/her.
28. If you could have any animal, what would it be and why?
29. When was a time you were really proud of yourself?
30. What's something that's really difficult for you?
31. If you had a magic wand, what would you make happen?
32. If you had only three wishes, what would they be?
33. What is something you'd love to learn more about?
34. What's your favorite part of school?
35. What three places would you love to travel to?
36. Who is your best friend? Tell me about them.
37. What is a fun memory you have with your best friend?
38. Who is a family member that you love? Tell me about them.
39. What is something most people love but you hate?
40. What is your biggest pet peeve? Why?
41. If you were ruler for a day, what would you do?



Low self-esteem is probably the most common theme among child therapy. This concept is something that we develop through our experiences, so constantly working to build your child's self-esteem is critical for their personal growth and self-concept.

# 50 Ways to Build SELF-ESTEEM for kids

- Like, love, embrace & accept yourself.
- Show RESPECT towards others and yourself.
- Use good posture. Stand tall as you are.
- Treat yourself with kindness & compassion, even & especially when life gets hard.
- Follow your curiosities & learn! Try or create something new.
- See MISTAKES AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN
- Remember That NO ONE IS PERFECT.
- Don't compare yourself to what you see in the media.
- Focus on the things you have control over & can change.
- Choose friends who treat you how you want to be treated.
- Be your own BESTFRIEND.
- Do more of what helps you feel good about yourself.
- LOOK in the MIRROR & tell yourself, "I love you."
- BE YOUR OWN BESTFRIEND.
- Choose friends who treat you how you want to be treated.
- Learn & practice healthy ways to cope with stress.
- Don't compare yourself with others. You are unique!
- READ!
- Get to work on the chores & other responsibilities you have been putting off.
- Laugh! Play! Have fun! Get silly!
- Say positive affirmations.
- WHOLEhearted LIVES MATTER
- exercise!
- Practice daily hygiene.
- PRACTICE GRATITUDE
- FOCUS ON THE POSITIVES & BE OPTIMISTIC!
- FORGIVE OTHERS. FORGIVE YOURSELF.
- Take slow mindful breaths.
- Eat healthy food.
- Say 'no' to things you are uncomfortable with.
- TELL THE TRUTH & BE HONEST.
- Resolve conflict peacefully & use I-Statements.
- ASK FOR HELP & SUPPORT.
- HAVE A GROWTH MINDSET.
- Remind yourself that your bravery is stronger than your fear.
- FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS, NOT PROBLEMS.
- TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS WITH SOMEONE YOU TRUST.
- Set goals & work towards them, step by step.
- Get enough sleep.
- SAY, "THANK YOU" WHEN SOMEONE COMPLEMENTS YOU.
- DRINK PLENTY OF WATER
- Say what you want, need & hope for.
- Try again when something doesn't work out the way you hoped it would.
- Be responsible for your choices at school & at home.
- COMPLETE YOUR SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS.
- DO random acts of kindness.
- HELP OTHERS.
- Start a new hobby or sport. Join a club at school.
- SPEND TIME WITH CARING ADULTS.
- Limit how much time you spend in front of screens.
- Give yourself a hug.

# Strategies and simple ways to build self-esteem

**50+ Ways to Build Self-Esteem**

WHOLEHearted SCHOOLS CONSULTING

- Say daily **POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS** to remind yourself of your strengths, awesomeness & worthiness.
- Avoid comparing yourself to others.**
- Identify the things you can & cannot control. Focus your energy on the things you can **CHANGE**.
- Practice Gratitude.** Give thanks for at least 3 things everyday.
- CHOOSE OPTIMISM, LOOK FOR the brighter side of things & see the CUP AS HALF FULL.**
- Learn & practice ways to create calm & peace within. Mindful breathing is a great start!
- Use **good posture. STAND (or sit) TALL AS YOU ARE.**
- Respect Other people's differences.** When we **SHOW respect for others**, we are also **SHOWING respect for ourselves**.
- Complete your school assignments, even when you don't want to (because it's too "boring" or "doesn't matter" or "too hard."). Feeling good can be found in getting things done.
- When things don't go your way or the unexpected happens, get back up & try a different approach.
- Ask for **HELP & SUPPORT.** No one can go it alone.
- Speak your truth.** Say what you want, need & hope for.
- REMINDE YOURSELF THAT YOU CAN DO TOUGH THINGS.**
- Turn off screens. Minimize time spent on social media. Do not base your self-worth on the click of a "like".
- FOLLOW YOUR CURIOSITIES** & learn, try, or create something new.
- Get moving & **EXERCISE** daily! Your body will thank you by releasing natural feel-good chemicals.
- FORM connections & relationships** with caring Adults.
- Talk about your feelings with someone you trust.
- Read for fun. Read for relaxation. Read for opening up your life to possibilities. **Read for YOU**
- Practice healthy ways to cope with stress.
- Reflect on what is important to you & what you value. Then make choices that are in alignment.
- Laugh! Play! have fun! Get Silly!**
- DO random acts of kindness**
- Give yourself a hug.
- Surround your self with supportive friends who treat you the way you want to be treated.
- Learn how to **resolve conflict peacefully.** Use I-Statements. And if you need help doing such, ask for help.
- EAT HEALTHY FOOD.**
- Complete chores, assignments & other responsibilities you have been putting off.
- Talk to yourself like you would to someone you care about.
- FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS INSTEAD OF PROBLEMS.**
- Join an after school club or sports team. Try a new hobby.
- Set goals for yourself & work towards them, **step by step.**
- Remind yourself that **your bravery is stronger than your fear.**
- Take **responsibility for and own up to your choices and actions at home & school.**
- Get enough sleep. And rest when your body needs it.
- Treat yourself with kindness and compassion, even and especially when life gets hard.
- Help others.**
- Forgive others AND yourself. Remember we are human and all make mistakes.
- See mistakes as opportunities to learn, grow & get second chances.
- Be Your Own Best Friend.**
- Make a list of your strengths & achievements & hopes
- Trust yourself.
- DRINK WATER.**
- Create. Build. Cook. Bake. Garden. Do Art.
- Tell the truth & be honest, even when it's hard to do.
- When someone gives you a compliment say, "Thank you."
- Do the next right thing.**
- Look in the mirror & tell yourself, **"I LOVE YOU."**
- Set your **BOUNDARIES** (what you are ok & not ok with) & stick with it. Know when to say, "NO, thank you." Resist peer pressure.
- Do more of what helps you to **step into your power & feel good about yourself.**
- Practice daily hygiene. Bathe regularly, brush & floss your teeth, trim your nails, wash your hands, etc.
- Remind yourself that the images you see on the media (magazine covers, movies, etc.) are edited & photoshopped. Don't compare yourself to what you see in the media.
- Embrace & accept **ALL** of you. This includes your **imperfections & vulnerabilities.**

Another important topic to be familiar with is self-harm and crisis signs and symptoms. Here are some alternatives to self-harming; if you have a child who self-harms, it is important to make the environment safe and be aware of feelings associated with this behavior.

# 100 SELF-HARM ALTERNATIVES

1. Draw on yourself in red
2. Put on a Disney movie
3. Go for a bike ride
4. Put on loud music
5. Take a hot bath
6. Do a word search
7. Fill out a Sudoku puzzle
8. Run around the block
9. Look at the clouds
10. Watch the stars
11. Color in a coloring book
12. Hold an ice cube
13. Do yoga
14. Read Harry Potter
15. Play a ukulele
16. Write a poem
17. Pop bubble wrap
18. Do your makeup
19. Do your hair
20. Play a video game
21. Play a board game
22. Go to church
23. Go to the library
24. Bake cookies
25. Order takeout
26. Play with your dog
27. Snuggle your cat
28. Do a workout video
29. Declutter your house
30. Reorganize your room
31. Take a cold shower
32. Play with Play-Doh
33. Rip up paper
34. Have a dance party
35. Punch a punching bag
36. Take pictures of nature
37. Drink some hot tea
38. YouTube funny videos
39. Clap your hands together
40. Meditate
41. Doodle on paper
42. Squeeze a stress ball
43. Cuddle a stuffed animal
44. Scream out loud
45. Google "Butterfly Project"
46. Call a helpline
47. Practice mindfulness
48. Ask for support
49. Call a friend
50. Watch a TV show

One of the toughest but most important topics in therapy is assessing for any thoughts of hurting self or others. Here are some warning signs that someone might potentially be thinking of hurting themselves. Below is the Suicide Prevention Hotline Number and it is available 24/7 for crisis intervention. If you or your child are feeling suicidal, it is important to call 911 or go straight to the nearest emergency room to seek professional help.



**NATIONAL**  
**SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE**<sup>TM</sup>  
**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

## **SELF-HELP RESOURCE LIST**

### **Hotline Phone Numbers**

NATIONAL CRISIS HOTLINE: 1-800-784-HELP (24/7)

SELF-HARM HOTLINE: 1-800-366-8288 OR 888-296-7988 (24/7)

RUNAWAY HOTLINE: 1-800-786-2929 (24/7)

CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE: 1-800-422-4453 (24/7)

MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE: 1-800-662-4357 (24/7)

EATING DISORDER HOTLINE: 1-800-931-2237

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE: 1-800-799-7233 (24/7)

NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESOURCE CENTER: 1-888-373-7888 (24/7)

VETERANS CRISIS LINE: 1-800-273-8255 (24/7)

HELPING HAND-UNITED WAY: Call 211 (24/7)

### **Texting Hotlines**

CRISIS HOTLINE NUMBER: 741741 - Text the word **GO**

HOTLINE NUMBER FOR TEENS: 839863 - Text the word **TEEN**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE NUMBER: 233733 – Text **BeFree**

NATIONAL SAFE PLACE: Text **SAFE** and your current location to 69866

### **Websites:**

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

[crisistextline.org](http://crisistextline.org)

[teenlineonline.org](http://teenlineonline.org)

[selfinjury.com](http://selfinjury.com)

# MY MENTAL HEALTH COPING PLAN

## Warning Signs

- Feelings of hopelessness, isolation, anger, irritability, loneliness
- Negative view of self
- Isolation or feeling alone
- Aggressiveness and irritability
- Feeling like a burden
- Drastic change in mood and behavior
- Engaging in risky behaviors
- Verbal conversations about death
- Increase use of drugs or alcohol
- Withdrawing from activities

## Keeping Safe

- Remove any guns, knives, medications, or other things that may cause harm
- Keep a list of contact names and crisis hotline numbers readily available
- Go to a public place
- Tell someone how you're feeling
- Take a step back and try to separate emotions from your actions
- Think of all the things that are worth living for and why your life is valuable
- Work on immediate coping strategies
- Engage in enjoyable and healthy activities
- Make a plan for living

## Protective Factors

- Engage in mental health care
- Ask for help
- Avoid being alone
- Connect with nature
- Create a schedule that fosters hope
- Engage in physical activities
- Create a safety plan to follow
- Avoid drugs/alcohol

## Coping Strategies

- Self-Soothing**
  - Comfort yourself through your senses
    - Touch: grab something (stuffed animal, playdoh, stress ball)
    - Hear: Listen to music, meditate
    - See: happy pictures, nature
    - Taste: Mints, gum, sour candy
    - Smell: Lotion, candles
- Distraction**
  - Do a puzzle
  - Go for a walk/exercise
  - Go to a public place
  - Read a book
  - Listen to music
  - Engage in a hobby
- Opposite Action**
  - Watch something funny, read a funny or happy book/magazine, listen to happy and upbeat music
- Emotional Awareness**
  - Journaling
  - Drawing
  - Painting
- Mindfulness**
  - Deep breathing techniques
  - Meditation
  - Relaxation recordings
  - Yoga

## Contacts

1. Clinician Name: **Family Medical Center of Michigan**  
Phone: **517-263-1800 (Open during office hours, M-F)**
2. Clinician Name: **Lenawee Community Mental Health**  
Address: **1220 N. Main St. Adrian MI 49221**  
Phone: **517-759-3903**
3. Local Urgent Care Services: **or call 911 Available 24/7**
4. Suicide Prevention Lifeline Phone: **1-800-273-TALK (8255) Available 24/7 or Text "Go" to 741741**

## THINGS I CAN SAY TO SUPPORT PEOPLE WHEN I NEED HELP

- I'm feeling \_\_\_\_\_, I don't know what to say or do but I don't want to be alone.
- I am struggling with my mental health, I need a better plan.
- I don't feel safe by myself, can you stay with me until I feel better?
- My mind is in a dark place, can you help distract me?
- Can you check in with me every few \_\_\_\_\_ to make sure I'm alright?