



## *Building your child's self-esteem*

Children with healthy self-esteem are likely to have better relationships and to do well in school. As a parent, you have an incredible amount of influence over your child's level of self-esteem. The following are some helpful tips to develop positive self-esteem in your child.

- Have realistic expectations of your child. If your child is able to achieve what you expect, then he or she will feel successful.
- Make your child feel special and appreciated. Set aside time each week for you and your child to spend alone together.
- Emphasize your child's strengths. Make a list of your child's strengths and use different opportunities to point out his or her abilities. For example, if your child is a good artist, display his or her artwork.
- Let your child help you with activities, such as cooking, chores, or wrapping presents for others. This is a great opportunity to demonstrate that he or she is helpful and can help others. It is also a nice time to point out his or her strengths!
- Try to focus on the positive behaviors and acknowledge them. Avoid negative comments. Instead, frame feedback in a positive way.
- Try not to compare siblings. Instead, highlight the strengths of each child equally.
- Help your child develop problem-solving skills. As a child becomes better at finding solutions to problems, his or her confidence increases.

# Extreme Anger or Irritability

All children show signs of anger or are irritable at different points throughout child development. These behaviors are a part of a child's exploration of how to express his or her emotions to others. However, if these behaviors begin to impact his or her daily interactions with peers and family members, or if the child or other people are getting hurt, then it is possible that an underlying mental health issue is the cause.

The following is a list of typical signs and symptoms of extreme anger or irritability. Your child may be extremely angry or irritable if he or she:

- Often kicks, hits, or bites
- Has explosive tantrums
- Acts aggressive toward other children, adults, or objects
- Gets easily frustrated
- Misunderstands other people's expressions, words or actions. For example, a child may think a parent is angry with him or her when in fact the parent is just being quiet for another reason.
- Begins to use aggressive words frequently
- Is easily irritated by events or people

Possible mental health diagnoses within this symptom cluster include:

- Anxiety Disorders (p48)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (p52)
- Bipolar Disorder (p59)
- Depression (p67)
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) (p82)
- Substance Abuse and Dependence (p94)