



Fostering Self-Esteem:
Supporting Kids Ages 6–8

What Shapes Self-Esteem?



"Am I Capable?"

Self-esteem begins with how children see themselves – shaped by everyday successes, setbacks, and the messages they hear from the adults who matter most.



"Am I Valued?"

Kids form their sense of worth through consistent, warm, and developmentally appropriate feedback – learning they are loved no matter what.



Emotional Safety

When children feel safe to try, supported when they mess up, and loved unconditionally, that emotional safety becomes the foundation for long-term self-worth.

What's Happening at Ages 6–8



External Awareness

Kids become more aware of grades, teacher feedback, and how they compare to peers.



Still Leaning on You

Even as they crave independence, they still rely heavily on your reactions to understand what their effort means.



Inner Voice Forms

This is when kids begin developing self-talk – the inner voice they'll carry with them when they feel stuck or unsure.



You're the Model

When you use calm, encouraging language out loud, you're shaping how they'll talk to themselves down the road.

What You Can Do & Say



Reframe Mistakes

If they say *"I'm so bad at this!"* try: *"It's okay to feel stuck – your brain learns every time you try. Let's take another look together."*



Guide, Don't Fix

Instead of jumping in with the answer, try: *"You're figuring this out one piece at a time – and I love how you're sticking with it."*



Name Their Bravery

Before a performance or new challenge, whisper: *"It's really brave to try something that matters to you."*



Be Present in Struggle

When they feel embarrassed or mess up, say: *"It makes sense you feel that way. I'm here while you figure it out."*



Name the Effort

Specific, genuine affirmations – even overheard – help build an internal belief system that effort matters more than getting it right the first time.

The Goal: Lasting Inner Belief



Calm Witness

Encouraging self-esteem means being a calm witness when they feel frustrated – not fixing everything or offering nonstop praise.



Space to Try Again

Creating space to practice trying again teaches: *"I can handle hard things. And I'm still loved when I mess up."*



Your Voice Shapes Theirs

Your warmth, your words, and your steady presence help them believe in themselves – even when you're not in the room.



You're Not Alone

You're already doing so much. Your Ollie team is always here – every step of the way.



What Kids Remember

Kids remember how they were *supported in struggle* far more than how they were *praised in success*. Your tone in tough moments matters most.

References

- References: American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), Children's Hospital Colorado, Boston Children's Hospital, Child Development Journal.