



Character Trait of the Month May: Confidence

**The below article has been copied and slightly modified from an article published by The Child Mind Institute. To see the original article, please click [here](#).*

What is Confidence and how can we help instill it in our students? [The Child Mind Institute](#) states that when we provide opportunities for kids to feel success, a generous amount of encouragement, and we spend quality time together, we can help young people grow up feeling good about themselves and the world around them.

Think about the last time someone acknowledged your hard work and told you they believed in you. That kind of encouragement not only gives adults the kind of confidence boost they need to keep going, but it also builds the best kind of confidence a child can have.

There's a big difference between encouragement and praise. One rewards the person while the other rewards the task. Praise can make a child feel that they're only worthwhile if they do something flawlessly. Encouragement, on the other hand, acknowledges the effort.

For example, "This sand castle is amazing!" vs. "You worked so hard on this sand castle! Great job."

Too much praise can create pressure to perform and set up a constant need for approval from others. It's better instead to give your child the message that the effort—and doing their best to see something through to the end—is what's truly important.

For more examples on what to say to your students to help build their confidence and give their self-esteem a boost, please see the graphics below, created by [Big Life Journal](#).



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15 COMPLIMENTS FOR KIDS

THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH LOOKS

- ♥ Thank you for being you.
- ♥ I love listening to your stories.
- ♥ You're a thoughtful friend.
- ♥ You make me smile.
- ♥ You make others feel welcome.
- ♥ I admire your confidence.
- ♥ Your passion is contagious.
- ♥ Love spending time with you.
- ♥ You lead others without being bossy.
- ♥ You're determined.
- ♥ I love how focused you are.
- ♥ You're a great listener.
- ♥ Your ideas matter.
- ♥ You give great advice.
- ♥ You care for others with such kindness.

HOW TO COMPLIMENT YOUR CHILD TO BUILD SELF-ESTEEM:

- ♥ Focus on non-appearance related compliments
- ♥ Be sincere (children can tell)
- ♥ Focus on what they can control or their actions
- ♥ Communicate unconditional love (do not add "but")
- ♥ Model saying, "Thank You," when you receive a compliment

COMPLIMENTING YOUR CHILD ON SOMETHING OTHER THAN THEIR LOOKS HELPS BUILD THEIR SELF-ESTEEM AND TEACHES THEM THAT WHO THEY ARE IS WHAT MATTERS MOST.



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HOW YOU PRAISE YOUR CHILD MATTERS

◇ LOOK BEYOND THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS:

"I noticed you encouraging your friends at the tournament, what a supportive friend you are!"

◇ FOCUS ON HOW THEY GOT THERE:

"You didn't give up during the entire game and had great energy. It was so fun watching you!"

◇ NOTICE THEIR PRACTICE AND HARD WORK:

"Have you been practicing? I've noticed your aim is much sharper!"

◇ NOTICE WITHOUT GIVING YOUR EVALUATION:

"Your room looks clean."



WHY DOES IT WORK?

WHEN YOU:

- ◇ Look beyond their achievements
- ◇ Focus on HOW they got there
- ◇ Notice their hard work
- ◇ Notice without giving your evaluation

THEY THINK:

- "My mom cares about the person that I am!"
- "Doing my best matters."
- "I can achieve anything when I work hard and practice."
- "It matters how I view my work, I don't need someone's approval."