

I Can Do It! 7 Tips for Teaching Your Children Self Reliance (あなたにもできる！子供に自信をつける7つの方法)

by: Dr Robyn Silverman

Most parents are trying to stay clear of the label "helicopter parents," because they don't want to be seen as the type of mother or father who hover and "overprotect."

The most powerful parents have realized that when their children have the opportunity to make mistakes, they gain an invaluable opportunity to learn from those mistakes.

It's developmentally appropriate for children to become more and more independent, self reliant and responsible as they age.

It can be challenging for parents to know when to step back and let their children try something on their own.

After all, from the time their children were babies, parents have spent years meeting many to all of their child's needs.

Striking a balance between allowing your children to do tasks for themselves and helping them when they seem to need or want is a talent of very powerful parents. This balance allows their children to thrive because they feel more confident in themselves while still feeling supported and properly mentored.

How can we instill self reliance and responsibility into our children?

(1) Allow your children to make some decisions:

Even young children can make sound decisions if you give them a few select choices.

Do you want to wear the red shirt or the blue shirt?

Would you like a peanut butter sandwich or a cheese sandwich?

As children get older, you can allow them to make more important decisions with little to no guidance.

They can determine things like which Fall sport they'd like to play, if they need a tutor for math, and which friends they'd like to spend time with each day without needing much, if any, input from parents.

While it's tempting to make these kinds of decisions for your older children,

they need to stand on their own two feet?after all, their decisions are often correct!

(2) Encourage your children to try tasks on their own:

While it's often quicker and more skillfully done when we do it for

them,
children need to engage in tasks on their own if they're ever going to learn how to do them well.
Laundry, shoe-tying, and making the bed are great places to start with young children.
Older children can handle more complicated tasks such as cooking, preparing their own lunch, and doing their own homework.

(3) Model responsibility and self reliance:

Parents have many responsibilities?let your child see them and hear about them!
Say out loud; "This screw seems a little loose, I'll go get the screwdriver and tighten it"
or "I have to plan our weekly menu for dinner; let's see...Monday night we'll have..."
" When children see you making decisions, taking initiative, and displaying self reliant behaviors, they will engage in similar behavior.

(4) Be your child's coach rather than his sage:

When your child asks you questions about how to do something or what to do in a certain situation, sometimes asking questions is more important than providing answers.
"What do you think you should do? How would you feel if you chose X? What would happen if you did Y instead?"
These questions can unlock the answers in your own child's brain so the next time he's in a similar situation he'll be able to call on his own experience and judgment to make a decision.

(5) Be a good support system:

Sometimes this means cheering them on from the sidelines and other times it means encouraging them to try again.
Of course, when children truly need your help, they should know that they can count on you.
If you teach them to ask for help when they really need it (when something seems unsafe or too challenging), they should know that you will be there to assist them.
Children who know that they can count on their parents when they really need it feel better about taking risks and the possibility of making mistakes.

(6) Provide them with responsibilities:

Chores are great for teaching children how to be self reliant as well as how to work as a team.
After teaching them how to do the chore properly, let them give it a try with some assistance, if needed. You can even work on a checklist together which helps to

break down the task into easy,
age-appropriate chunks.

For example, (a) Take the clothes out of the dryer, (b) Separate the clothes by family member,
(c) Match up all the socks...and so on.

When we provide children with ways to help out the family, we give them opportunities
to build responsibility, self confidence, and self reliance.

(7) Encourage healthy risk-taking:

Assure your children that making mistakes is OK.

The most important thing is that s/he tries!

Most things are not done perfectly the first time?even when you're an adult.

It doesn't mean "the end of the world" and there is no reason to be embarrassed.

Watching our children make mistakes can be challenging.

We may want to rush to their aid to shield them from impending failure or disappointment.

However, when parents do this, they rob their children of some very powerful tools; self confidence,
stick-to-itiveness, and of course, self reliance.

Your children are relying on you to teach them how to approach the world.

Sometimes that means they have to watch you to learn how to approach the task.

But other times that means, you must watch them from the sidelines and encourage them to
figure it out on their own.

About The Author

Dr. Robyn J.A. Silverman is a success coach, parenting expert and child development specialist

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