



**8 TIPS
ON RAISING
STRONG,
CONFIDENT,
DAUGHTERS WITH
HIGH SELF-ESTEEM**

GIRLS ATHLETICS

GAAALS

AND LIFE SKILLSSM

EMPOWERING GIRLS FOR LIFE

Self-Esteem vs Self-Confidence

Given our work, we often use the words self-esteem and self-confidence. When I first started GAALS, I used these words interchangeably. Even though I knew they were different, I couldn't articulate how. So I looked up the definitions.

SELF-ESTEEM

refers to how much self love you have - how you feel about yourself overall. Experiences and situations shape how you view yourself, which in turn affects your self-esteem.

SELF-CONFIDENCE

related to actions - how you feel about your overall abilities. Confidence in general is a belief that you can succeed at something. So you can be confident about one part of your life, but insecure or unconfident about another.

It's easier to build self-confidence than self-esteem. since confidence builds by taking action -- by trying things you find hard, going outside your comfort zone, facing obstacles. If you work at something, you'll become more confident in your abilities and eventually recognize that you'll be fine if you fail.

When you're confident in areas of your life, you begin to increase your overall sense of esteem.

When you love yourself, your self-esteem improves, which makes you more confident. That is precisely our mission at GAALS, to work on helping girls increase both. But it is also what we as parents can do with and for our daughters.

Here are
some tips.



TIP #2

Allow Opportunities to Build Resilience

We all want the best for our kids, and for them to be happy. But, nowadays it seems many of us take this a bit too far. We make things easier for them because we don't want them to have to deal, or because we don't want to deal with them. The reality is that letting them struggle and helping them develop the ability to feel the fear and proceed is the best things we can do for them. From the simplest things, like letting them freeze at recess because they chose not to wear a jacket to school in 35-degree weather (instead of dropping it off at school), to not allowing them to quit the soccer team mid season. While our actions (or lack of actions) won't save us from hearing complaints, it will save us some work. But more importantly, it will allow our daughters to learn how to problem solve, manage difficult situations and use failure as a stepping-stone to success.

TIP #1

AVOID SELF-CRITICISM AND PRACTICE SELF COMPASSION

It's not just what we say to our daughters, it's also about how we talk about ourselves - like casually saying how fat, forgetful or stupid we are. When we criticize ourselves, the natural assumption our daughters make is that we are judging them harshly as well. Instead, treat yourself like you treat your good friends. Adjust your expectations. Be accepting.



TIP #3

Encourage Your Daughter to Find and Do Things She Enjoys and Things She's Good At.

Knowing your gifts can boost your self-esteem. As her parent, you can compliment these things that she already feels good about in order to reinforce the confidence she's building.



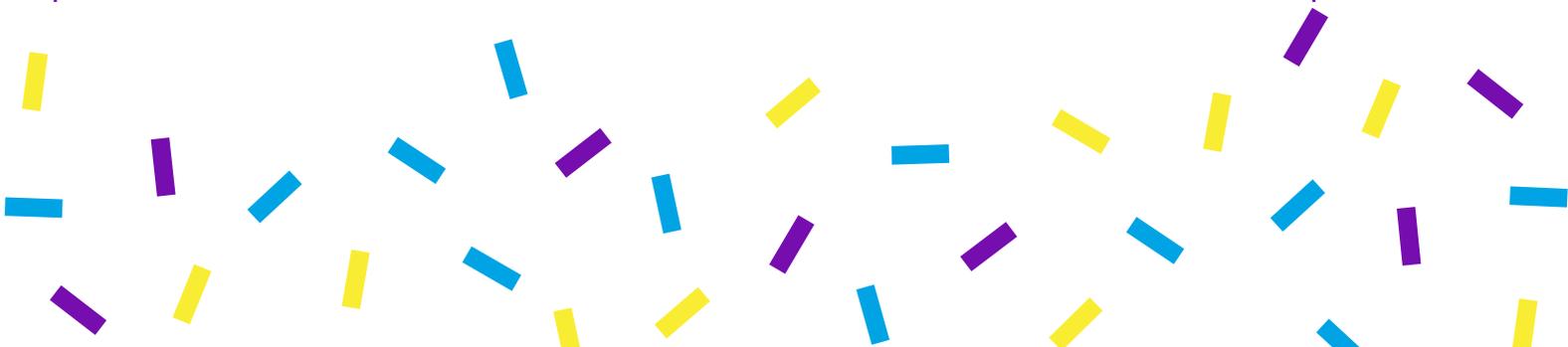
TIP #4

Praise Her Efforts and Abilities.

It's only natural as parents that we praise our children. But according to recent research, overdoing it can do more harm than good. A child's belief in herself needs to come from within.

That doesn't mean you can't respond to your daughter's successes. The key is to praise her effort, not the result.

So if your daughter tells you that she aced her test, resist the temptation to tell her how smart she is. Instead, share how proud you are with a response that focuses on the process of achieving that grade, like "Great! Your hard work really paid off." Or, if your daughter proudly shows you a beautiful picture she painted, don't proclaim that she's an artistic genius. Instead, share your enthusiasm by recognizing all that went into it. "You must have put in a lot of time and effort to create such a beautiful picture!"



TIP #5

Teach Her How To Toot Her Own Horn.

Telling others about our strengths not only helps build us up, it creates opportunities for others to acknowledge our strengths, which feels good. Many women (myself included), find it challenging to show and share when we're successful or feel good about our abilities because we worry about being seen as a showoff or a bragger. Girls have an especially difficult time with this. If you teach them the difference, they'll hopefully be able to share their achievements comfortably.

Here's an example:

I studied so much for the test, I'm going to do well. versus I'm going to get an A because I'm super smart.

It's not easy for young girls to find the right "non bragging" words. So teach your daughter that when they're good at something, actions speak louder than words. Others will notice without having to say anything.

TIP #6

Model How to Accept Compliments.

Let's be honest, many moms aren't very good at taking compliments (I'm guilty too). While it feels good it can make us uncomfortable. A typical reaction is to downplay the compliment. Like if someone compliments our shirt we might respond with disbelief saying, "This old thing, I've had it for years." Or "it was so cheap!"

Our daughters are listening and watching, and often develop the same discomfort. By modeling how to accept compliments gracefully - smiling and thanking the person - they will likely learn to follow in your footsteps.

As they become teens though, many girls get embarrassed when they're singled out - for big things like scoring the winning goal in a championship, or small things like getting a turn to recite the pledge in front of the class. Regardless of her reactions, it's important to respect where your daughter is at while you continue to positively accept compliments.



TIP #7

Go Beyond "You Look So Pretty!"

Given how we're bombarded with images of beauty on a regular basis, it's critical that girls learn that looks aren't enough and definitely aren't the most important aspect of who they are. Although it's not easy. I know better than to focus on what someone looks like. Yet it feels natural to compliment girls, saying how pretty they are or that their dress is beautiful. And it feels unnatural to ignore someone's appearance - especially your daughter's.

One solution is to follow up a compliment on a girl's looks with questions or statements that focus on how she feels or her abilities. For example, you can tell her that you love how she put her outfit together. Or you can say she seems to have a real flare for fashion and ask her if she's interested in it.

Don't forget, we can also use every opportunity to share how we feel beautiful.



TIP #8

Point Out the Beauty All Around You.

When you recognize beauty in the world, it's easier to see it in yourself. Make a habit of commenting on things you see, hear, touch and even smell. Whether it's a breathtaking sunrise, the joy of laughter, the comfort of a soft blanket or the fragrant smell of popcorn, when you focus and connect on trivial things, your daughter will learn to do the same. That then extends to her inner and outer beauty.

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GAALS
programs, blogs, research & more,
visit us at
www.GAALSusa.com
or email us at
info@GAALSusa.com