

Parents and Their Children's Self-Esteem

Praise your children. Show your children that you believe in them by focusing on what they do right and well. Focus on your child's strengths and make sure to show your appreciation. Try saying, "You can do it" or "I have faith in you."

Focus on the positive. Use positive comments and focus on what your child does well. Positive comments will generate more positive behavior. Try to hold back negative words when praising your child. Wait until another time to point out what he/she could have done better or differently. When combined, negative comments have a greater impact than positive ones. Don't say, "You did a lousy job when picking up." Instead say, "Thanks for picking up," and next time you can show him/her how to do it better.

Respect your child. Everyone is special and unique, so do not compare your children with other siblings or friends. Comparing your children to others will make them believe that they are not as good as others and make them feel bad about themselves. Avoid saying, "Your brother always gets good grades, why can't you?"

Spend time with your children. Share activities with your children and get to know them and what is important to them. This will show a child that you consider him/her special and will help you develop a stronger relationship. Try doing activities that you and your child both enjoy. Try packing lunch together the night before school, playing a game, preparing dinner, or discovering a new activity. On weekends, plan walks in the park, picnics, or other outdoor activities.

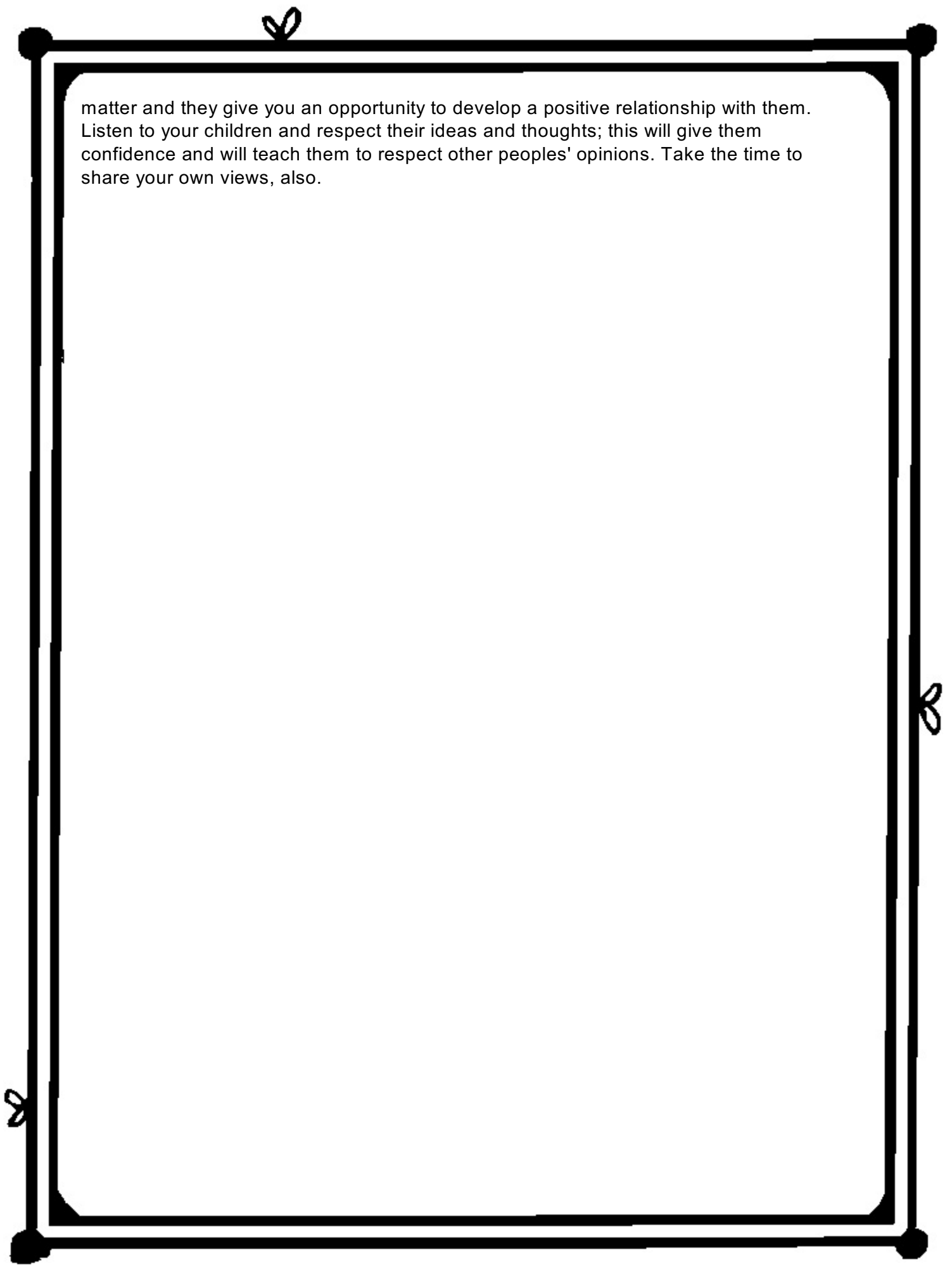
Become involved in your child's education. Tell your children that school and education are important. Check the progress of your child at school and talk about schoolwork with them everyday. Ask questions like: "What happened at school today?" or "What are you learning?", and "Do you like it?" When you listen to their answers, your children will feel like they are being supported and that what they do at school is important.

Your child is an important member of the family. It is important that children feel that they contribute and have a sense of belonging in your family. Assigning responsibilities to children makes them feel helpful and a part of the family. They will feel good about themselves because they are making a useful contribution to the family.

Talk about the future. It is important to share your expectations with your children -- the things you want them to accomplish and where you want them to go in life. Talk of things they want for themselves and what you want for them.

Talk about your children's interests and goals in life and the steps they need to take to achieve them. Help your children reach their goals, stand behind them, offering support and encouragement.

Communication is very important. Talking, asking questions, and listening to your children are all necessary because they allow your children to feel that their opinions



matter and they give you an opportunity to develop a positive relationship with them. Listen to your children and respect their ideas and thoughts; this will give them confidence and will teach them to respect other peoples' opinions. Take the time to share your own views, also.