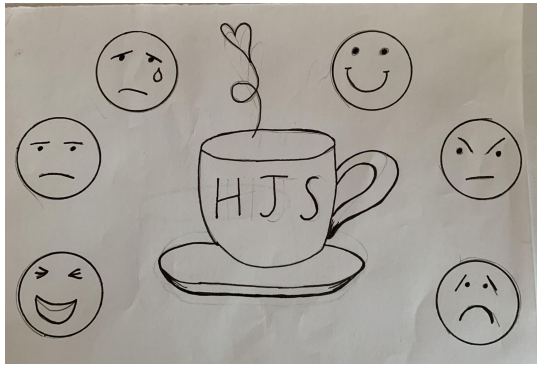
Wellbeing Hub focus coffee morning

How to support children’s self-confidence & self-esteem



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Thrive developmental strands

- Thrive model is constructed in strands working from bottom to top
- Each strand comes online sequentially as we grow and remains in play throughout life
- Within each strand there are 3 developmental tasks that should be fulfilled at the right time to move on successfully to the next strand

The strands translate into six fundamental aspects of learning for emotional and social development:

Interdependence: 11-18 years
Skills & Structure: 7-11 years
Power & Identity: 3-7 years
Thinking: 18 months-3 years
Doing: 6-18 months
Being: 0-6 months

Supporting self-confidence/esteem through Thrive

- Self confidence and esteem is, and can be developed throughout all stages of life. But during our childhood development the **key** phases where we learn and develop our self confidence is during the ages of 6-18 months and 3-7 years old.
- When looking at the Thrive Approach and its developmental model, the 2 **key** Strands to focus on are:

Power & Identity: 3-7 years

Doing: 6-18 months

As with all the Strands of the Thrive model, if those Developmental Tasks are not experienced and met during that right-time development, gaps and interrupted development can occur later as we grow.

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Self-confidence/esteem at Doing

The inner world of the child:

- A child with an interruption at Doing feels helpless and insecure and struggles to make sense of the world around them. They may be timid, lacking curiosity and confidence, and are fearful of exploring, experimenting and trying new things. Some children want to `join in' yet fear they will get things wrong, make mistakes and/or be ridiculed.
- Important to note that a child with low self-confidence and/or self-esteem is not just a child who is passive, quiet and hangs back. A child can also display extreme responses of anger, frustration, distress and depression.

6-18 months

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Self-confidence/esteem at Doing

- A child without the necessary experiences of practise and rehearsal at a Doing level does not develop an appropriate sense of their abilities…either believing they can do everything, ‘Superman’, or nothing. Sometimes they believe they should be able to do things without appreciating that everyone has to learn first before they can master new skills. This may be expressed as frustration/anger/disappointment with themselves or with others.
- At times the child can be flooded with intense feelings which can be displayed as those extreme emotions or a complete shutdown (fight, flight or freeze response).

6-18 months

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Self-confidence/esteem at Doing

- This particular Strand of the Thrive Approach is vital to supporting, developing and promoting a child's self-confidence and self-esteem.
- As within all the Strands of Thrive there are those 3 Developmental Tasks that must be experience and practised in order for a child to progress with their childhood and neurological development.
- Within the Doing Strand these Developmental Tasks are :

Exploring and experimenting

Experiencing options

Initiating, engaging and doing

- All these aspects of the Developmental Tasks here help children to acknowledge and support their self-confidence/esteem.
- The activities for this Strand are carefully targeted to meet self-confidence/esteem needs and help to establish them within the child.

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Parents' role when carrying out activities from Doing:

- Acting as the co-adventurer, inviting your child into sensory exploration
- Encourage your child to explore and experiment safely
- Give meaning to his/her feelings and discoveries and explain about the world around them

Key to know:

This is not a time for questioning, unless it's rhetorical. Instead notice, describe and name sensations and emotions for your child. The more your child knows about emotions, why they're feeling them and knowing how to describe them, the more confidence they will have in themselves about the emotions that they feel.

There is some emphasis on physical activity for developing self-confidence and esteem, because If children feel capable and good in their bodies and they enjoy physical activities, they will instinctively be more confident in themselves.

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Strategies for activities at Doing

- Allow plenty of time for initial exploration and preparation before engaging with any activity; stay alongside and remain available to your child.
- Be encouraging and patient when showing your child how to do things.
- Model being interested and excited by the world and things in it.
- Communicate a sense of fun and enjoyment.
- Invite your child to show you what they have done or found out. Show your interest and refer to it again later in a positive way.
- Ensure the safety of your child and always assess and anticipate risks.
- Be curious about your child.
- Create opportunities for the exploration and expression of preferences. Notice, enjoy and be attentive to any likes or dislikes your child expresses.

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Activities at Doing - in nature

The Beach:

- The coast is a superb play area for young people, there are endless possibilities for activities to promote self-confidence and esteem. The more children experience and do the more confident and able they become.
- Build structures, dig wells and tunnels - lots of different textures offering sensory experience and experimenting. Opportunities for praise and to share what you notice your child can do.
- Draw pictures in the sand, comment on what you observe from your child.
- Running along the beach, jumping waves, handstands and cartwheels etc are good to do on the sand and is great to test physical capability and bodily limitations. Share the joy of your child achieving something they can do, tell them the emotions you feel watching them explore and learn.
- Collect shells, pebbles, stones, different varieties of seaweed, fossils - providing a sensory investigation.

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Activities at Doing - in nature

Camping:

- Building fires, putting up a tent, organising their own living space, washing and drying clothes, cooking their own food. Great for learning and experiencing new skills also to offer praise and encouragement.
- Campfire - building an awareness of safety - keeping the fire lit. Also brilliant for gaining confidence by sharing stories around the campfire with others, also things they've discovered and accomplished during that day.

Hiking/walking in the countryside:

- Provides an experimental play space where a child can endlessly explore and observe.
- Reading a map - providing a new skill to learn or improve on what they already know.
- Challenge physically - experiencing unpredictable weather, climbing and descending steep hills, different terrains. Helps build knowledge and confidence in their physical abilities.

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- Things you can observe: birds, animals, insects - what they look like, the sounds they make - feed into your child's curiosity, express your genuine interest.
- Flowers, plants and rocks - collecting/pressing them - offer descriptive language about textures and colours.
- Other things like: Blackberry picking, playing pooh-sticks, skimming stones, crossing streams and climbing trees - these all offer a range of options to help build your child's confidence and enquiring mind. These can also allow your child to show off their existing capabilities thus developing and feeding their sense of self-confidence/esteem.

Activities at Doing

Baking:

- Great activity to provide encouragement to your child, offer opportunities for exploration and experimenting and how to do it safely.
- Lots of different textures, tastes and smells to describe and explain, offering your child that language to learn and digest.
- Take note of your child's reaction to all the different tools and ingredients they are using, name those reactions for your child - their sensations and emotions.
- Motivate your child to pick and choose flavours, toppings and designs of the food that you are making together.

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Activities at Doing

- Draw around both hands… on the left hand each finger car be filled in by the child with ‘5 things I like about myself.' Then on the right hand can be ‘5 things you like about me’ which can be filled in by you, or with any family member.

- This gives the child a great moment to think about how they value themselves and how others value them.
- Decorate the hands, make them beautiful and colourful, display them so they can be seen!

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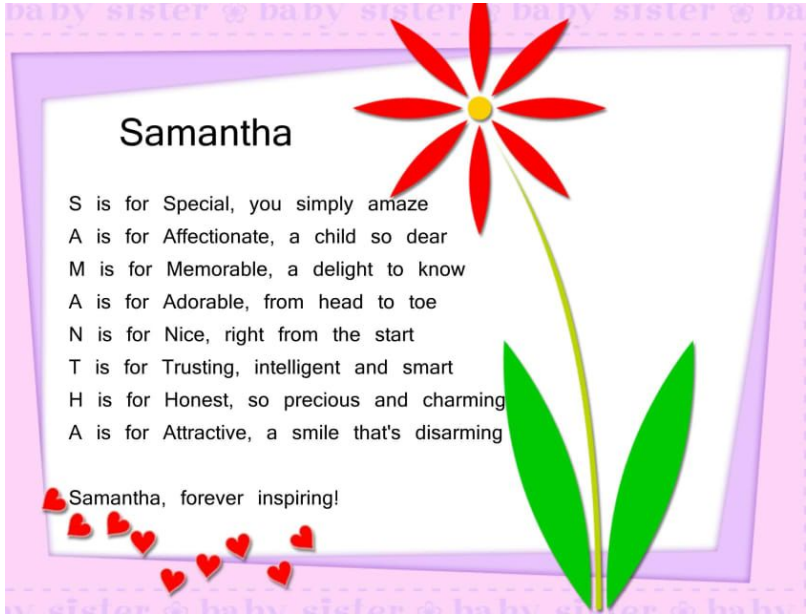
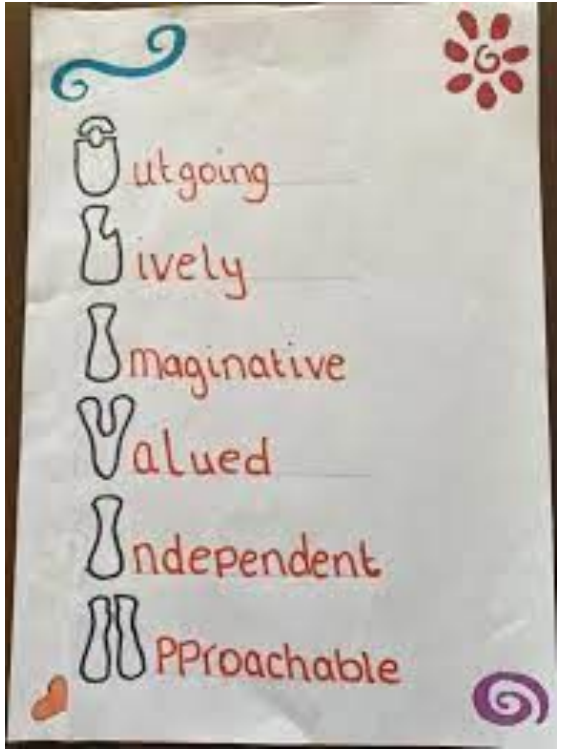
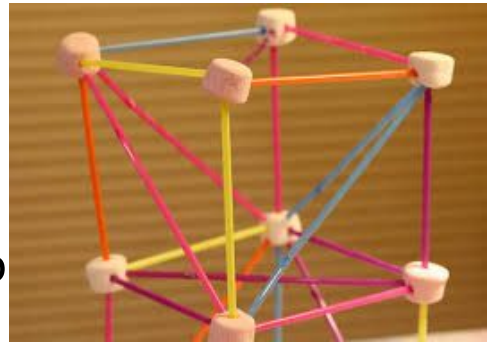
Acrostic name poems

- Your child can write a poem about themselves or you can write a poem about them.
- A chance to reflect on who they are now and/or who they will become. What is important to them, what they like, how they value themselves, how you appreciate them etc.
- Can be a full poem or single words corresponding to the letters in their name to describe themselves.
- Decorate and display!



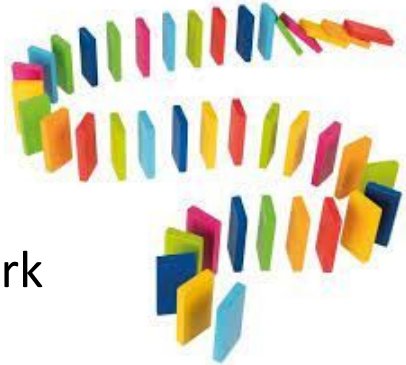


Activities at Doing



Building/construction

- Great for your child to show off their abilities and allow your child to believe in what they can do
- Builds confidence and self esteem through creativity and practicality
- Communicate your fun and enjoyment
- Give meaning to your child's discoveries
  - Explain why some things work well and other things don't



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Activities at Doing

Messy Play!

- Teaches children they can make their own entertainment
- There is no right or wrong way to do things
- Allows your child decide how to play with new textures in different ways - discover this with them

- Be alongside your child and offer language to describe the textures and smells. Describe their actions as they explore.
- Name any sensations or feelings
- Express your interest in them
- Teach that it is ok to be messy and dirty sometimes!

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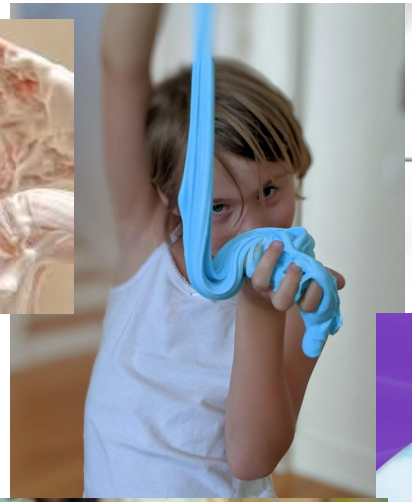
Messy Play!

- Slime / gloop
- Shaving foam
- Flour
- Baked beans / spaghetti loops
- Glitter
- Jelly
- Sand / kinetic sand
- Putty
- Water
- Paint
- Mud
- Orbeez



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Praise/Positivity Tree

- Recognition of achievements and qualities your child displays
- Sense of knowing that what they are doing is noticed, appreciated and makes a difference
- Positive affirmations for boosting self-esteem
- Tree/plant, real or not
- Tags or leaves/flowers/birds/animals
- Decorate and label which family member it is for
- ‘I remember when..’
- ‘You can do..’
- ‘You show me..’

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Examples of language to use: (Doing)

- “When you were building with those bricks I could see how hard you were concentrating”
- “I know you don't like something when you wrinkle up your nose”
- “That’s a really sticky thing to try and get clean”
- “That was brilliant, you were really hesitant to try that but you gave it a go.”
- “My tummy has butterflies in it when I get excited”
- “Your thinking was so focussed when you were choosing which paints to use.”
- “You are very decisive: you move quickly to what you want.”
- “I enjoy watching you when you do...”
- “Wow that was scary/exciting/impressive.”
- “The way you were able to organise and manage yourself just then was brilliant.”
- “That’s amazing, next time you can show me how to do that.”

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Self Esteem - as part of Concept of SELF
Development of self esteem - fundamental in ELSA and Thrive support.

Self Concept - In essence what makes you 'you'

Includes physical characteristics, personality factors, cultural identity, core beliefs, likes and dislikes, talents and interests etc all of us are a unique blend.

Self esteem = gap between
Self image + ideal self

Concept of self

Work on both ends (realistic!)

Self Image
Perceived reality

Ideal Self
Perceived Ideals
I

It is common and it is normal for children and young people to lack confidence from time to time as they develop through childhood and adolescence.

If a child has a fundamentally good self esteem then they will be able to cope with the ups and downs of life with more ease, and there are many things that we can do as parents and caregivers to support a child and raise their self esteem.

Someone with good self esteem generally shows-

- Acceptance of themselves - it's ok to make mistakes
- Awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses
- Willingness to try new things and explore outside their comfort zone
- Able to accept feedback from others
- Self care
- Ability to share and engage with others openly
- Confidence in their own abilities

This is a lot for a child/young person whose brain will not be fully developed until their 20s! Support is needed.

What might low self esteem look like ? - what your child might express at home

- Comparing themselves negatively to others (appearance, academic success, sporting ability etc)
- Being self critical and struggling to identify or accept personal positive qualities, traits, successes or characteristics
- Dismissing positive feedback from others
- Belief that others do not have genuine positive intentions towards them (eg ‘they are only playing with me because they don’t want to be on their own’)
- Not sharing opinions or preferences - not believing these are important or equal to others.
- Making assumptions that acts of injustice are deserved (‘bad things happen to me because I deserve it/am a bad person’)
- Taking personal responsibility for things beyond their control
- May experience reluctance to try new things due to anxiety
- Episodes of very low mood
- May experience difficulties making and maintaining friendships - potential anti social behaviour
- May have traits of perfectionism and struggle with making mistakes
- Worry about letting people down
- May seem OVER confident and full of own abilities, discounting others - MASKING - overcompensating due to insecurities

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Life can be difficult at times, a challenging journey, and children are dependent on us to support and guide them. It might help to visualise yourself as a child, and identify how you were supported on your own climb to adulthood. Or maybe there were gaps or problems from your own experience of being parented. Reflecting on this can help you and help your child.

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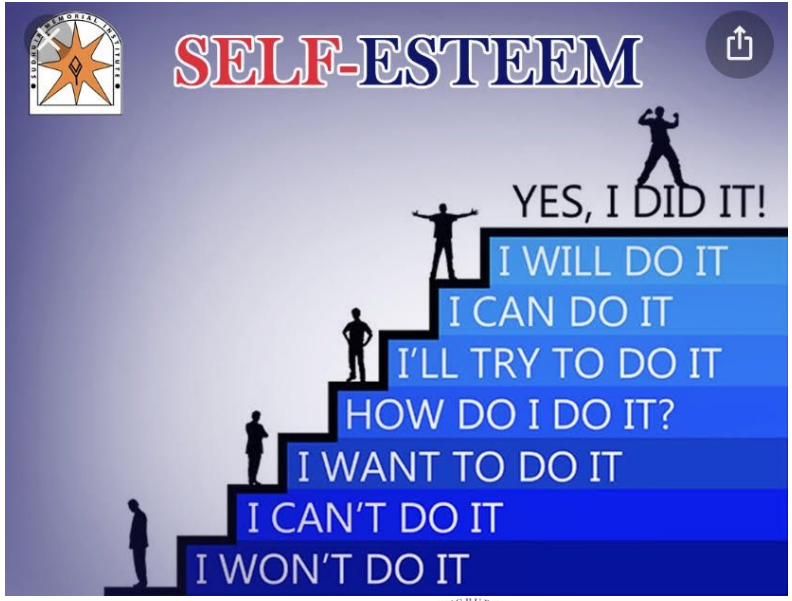
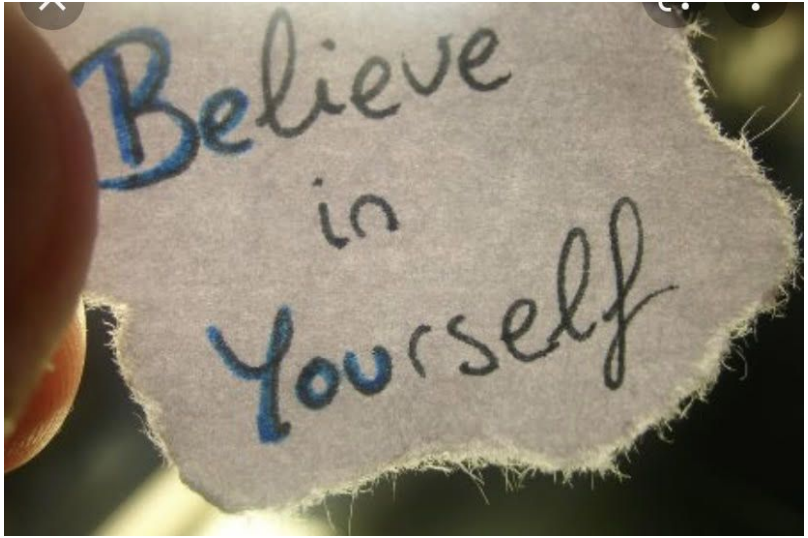
This picture shows how good self esteem and self efficacy (belief that you can affect the outcome of a situation - empowerment) can profoundly affect a person's ability to fulfil their potential.



The following slides explore ways that we can support the development of good self esteem in our children. Never underestimate the huge difference you can make. There is some crossover with our Thrive suggestions, just pick ideas for what works for your family, and the age and stage of your child.



NOTICE, comment, encourage and PRAISE

Your child's individuality, personality, characteristics, morals, values, ethics, behaviour, skills, effort, passion, goals, ambition, friendships, hobbies and interests.

Praise should be genuine and specific
Be aware of the negative bias factor
People won't tend to feel this praise is true, unless it matches their own perception, but it is still important to do!

Use 'I' statements **if a child is resistant to praise**
Also 'earshotting'

Eyecontact (in most cases) helps

Always focus on effort rather than attainment

Value the utterly unique singular individual that you love - let them know, everyday

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Role model

Being kind to yourself and prioritising self care needs - children are learning from us all the time. Parental self esteem matters.

Emphasise the importance of health and happiness, Nutrition, sleep, exercise, connection with others

Also role model making mistakes, and imperfection

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Encourage acceptance

Kindness and compassion towards others and ourselves

The way that you talk about others, and about yourself matters
Children will absorb and mirror these messages

Be aware of throwaway comments, body shaming, etc
Take a non judgemental stance towards others

Boys and girls can experience poor body image - self esteem
Always focus on health rather than appearance, strength rather than size

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Let children know they should not be afraid to voice their ideas and opinions.

‘Your voice matters, but so do the voices of others’ encourage respect, use listening skills (to be explored!)

It’s ok when people disagree, we all see things differently.
Assertiveness skills (also to be explored!)

This can be strengthened by allowing each family member to express their opinion, with equal space - use the ‘talking toy/cushion’

Let each child express own agency for choice - eg take turns to choose the game/movie

Help children discover and develop their talents

through clubs, groups and activities - support and encourage trying new things

Value creations and gifts

Encourage pride and recognition - The ‘Fridge Door’ effect

Help children understand that skill acquisition takes time
When they say ‘I can’t do it’ use the power of YET!
Growth mindset - future coffee morning?

Don’t underestimate the value of achieving something - a lego model, a picture, a jigsaw puzzle, baking a cake - this sense of achievement and satisfaction is integral to building self esteem

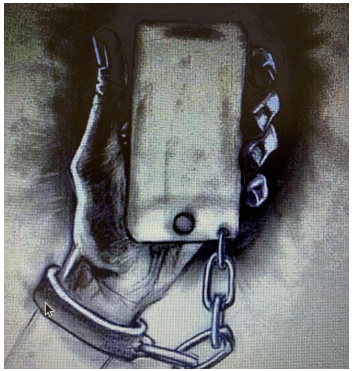
Positive affirmations -

Having things to look forward to and plans as well as celebrating success .

Eg ‘dreamboard’

Human Connection and the issue of social media - more relevant to older children, but the effects are trickling down, plus it is useful to be aware of this huge issue in advance of secondary school.

Huge factor in damaging children's self esteem and wellbeing due to constant comparisons, unrealistic expectations and the permanent pressure to 'keep up'



Encourage family digital downtime

Keep bedrooms social media free

Practice safe - social; INFO - look on our school website for guidance about Online security.
Review children's usage; ask **'how did it make you feel?'**
How much are they using social media/youtube

When a child has a phone/internet/social media state your rules as a parent from the outset, establish parental presence periodically

TIME as LOVE (and GENEROSITY)

Giving your child your time will add ‘credit to the bank’ of their self esteem

You are actively investing in their wellbeing, both now and for the future.

The more time and effort you have invested as a parent, the more you will have ‘in the bank’ to draw on when times get tough, and there is conflict or loss in your relationship, or when your child is facing external challenges to their self esteem.

Love language	HOW TO COMMUNICATE	ACTIONS TO TAKE	THINGS TO AVOID
Words of Affirmation	Encourage, affirm Active listening Empathy	Say I love you Specific/genuine praise Praise in front of others	Non constructive criticism Not recognising effort Putting yourself down
Physical Touch	Non verbal - body language and touch to express love and care	Hold hands, hugs, pats on back, read stories together Family group hugs	Physical neglect/distancing
Receiving Gifts	Gifts and gestures show that you are loved and cared for	Little notes Thoughtful relational gestures	Forgetting special occasions Unenthusiastic gift receiving from your child
Quality Time	1:1 time Express interest in what they are doing	Shared experiences/memories Eye contact. Small details	Distractions Long stints without 1:1 time
Acts of Service	Action phrases - ‘How can I help you with this’	Be there when say you will be. Work on projects together. Tidy room together	Changing priorities - others Lacking follow through on tasks.

ONE THING -
Complete each statement with one thing about yourself that is positive

One thing I like about myself is_____
One thing that makes me special is _____
One thing that makes me different is _____
One thing that I am thankful for is _____
One thing that I am good at is_____
One thing I like to do is _____
One thing that I can today to help myself is _____
One thing that I can do today to help someone else is _____
_____

Accept that there are some things that you can't change for your child.

Help them to develop strategies to communicate and cope with this things.

Empathise and validate feelings

All part of normal human experience and development.

Perfectionism doesn't exist in parenting

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RESOURCES -

CAMHS leaflet PDF Lots of the information on this presentation is from CAMHS
https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/body-image-self-esteem/

Further Advice and support -
Young Minds;
http://youngminds.org.uk
Parents helpline - 0808 802 5544

Family Lives:
http://www.familylives.org.uk/
Helpline - 08088002222

Handouts ? or on wellbeing hub - love languages reminder/one thing sheet/circle of control/Self esteem daily journal - focussing on recognising the positive

Books ‘You’re a star - a child’s guide to self esteem’ Poppy O’Neill
Anything by Big Life Journal (google)

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https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=z6J7pafxPOA

Youtube clip from a school nurse with basics about self esteem - might be useful

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