

*Issue # 3- November 2004*

**Freebies**

**Know Your Top Three Goals For 2005?**

Take this free **5 Minute Quiz** and download your **Free Goals Report!**

Now, your child can access free online SAT prep help. **Study Hall.com** gives your child the extra edge with a SAT Improvement Online Course.

**Relax and Breathe-** Free helpful relaxation tools and information to help you manage the demands of your life.

**Money4life E-book.pdf-**A free budgeting ebook.

**ClubMom-** A free national membership organization for moms.

**How To Learn.com-**Free personal learning styles inventory.

**Fact Monster.com-** Free online atlas, almanac, dictionary and encyclopedia.

**Free Kids Contest-**Geography Quiz, the Big Contest or Music Trivia

**Free Magazine for Parents of College or College Bound Students-**Reliable information about financial aid, admissions, campus life, etc.

**Homework Help.com-**Free live online tutoring sessions

**Free Online Flashcards-**Improve your child's memory and learning with these great free flashcards. You can choose from French, Spanish, Math or German.

**Free Tutor Tool-**Math and reading activities to boost your child's grades in school-at home.

**30 Free Ebooks & Worksheets for Kids-**Check out these ebook samples and get your child reading!

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**Self Esteem Killers vs. Confidence Boosters**

"You are always doing something stupid!" yelled the irate mother at her five year old daughter. The little girl kept her head down, staring at the half eaten hot dog that had fallen on the sidewalk.

As parents, we sometimes, don't realize how our words affect our children. Innocent teasing or constructive criticism can be more damaging than you imagine. Children, especially in the developmental stages need to have healthy self esteem. Being mentally fit is just as important as being physically fit. A child with healthy self esteem has confidence and does not look to others for approval or recognition. These children do not engage in self destructive behavior, because they know that they possess the power to live a fulfilled life.

In order for your child to succeed in their pursuits, they must be able to rely on their inner direction. When a parent, says to a child, "You might as well give up, you'll never win", that parent is sending the message that they do not believe in their child. How is that child going to be able to believe in him/her?

Self-esteem killers lead to a lack of personal strength and can be detrimental to personal development. As parents, it is our responsibility to help guide our children in the paths that will help them be responsible, loving adults. Children depend on us to give them the tools that will help them become self sufficient. So how can you help your child build their self esteem?

Encouragement-Encourage your child, but don't push them to try new things and expose them to new experiences. Instead of imposing your goals for your child, help them to achieve their own.

Support-Be a support system for your child. Let them know that even if things don't go their way, you will always be there to help them. Listen more and play an active role in their extracurricular activities. You may not always agree or understand what your child is doing, but letting them talk to you, will help them make wise and healthy decisions.

Be Positive-If you have a healthy and positive outlook on life, so will your child. Give importance to positive behavior. If you concentrate on the "C" your child received in Math, but did not congratulate your child on the good grades they received in other subjects, you are sending a negative message to your child. Practice being positive and avoid negative chatter.

Don't Be Judgmental or Too Critical- Giving you child a label, such as "You're so lazy, you never help out around the house", will not motivate your child to help you. Chances are, that child will begin to see themselves as lazy. Try rephrasing your words or try tell your child, "I work all week, so on the weekends, I'd really appreciate your help around the house".

Motivate Your Child-Help your child to identify their positive qualities by asking them for their opinion. Teach your child to explore possibilities so that they can make the right decisions.

Don't Make Comparisons-No children are the same. Appreciate the skills and talents that your child possesses. By comparing your child to a sibling or a friend's child, you are discouraging your child. Making reference to another child, will only build resentment.

Be Appreciative- Encourage your child by letting them know you appreciate their efforts.

By using these tools, you are helping your child to feel good about him/her.

### **Valuable Resources:**

- [Help Your Child Grow Self Esteem](#)
- [Children's Self Esteem](#)
- [Play a Major Role in Your Child's Self Concept](#)
- [150 Ways To Show Kids You Care](#)
- [101 Words To Encourage A Child](#)
- [Free Self Esteem Quiz for Children](#)
- [Self Esteem For Children Alliance](#)

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## **Helping a Reluctant Reader**

Do you have a hard time getting your child to read a book? This great article by Jacquie McTaggart will motivate your reluctant reader to an enthusiastic reader.

Mark Twain once said, “The man who doesn’t read is no better off than the man who can’t read.” The same is true of kids. Youngsters between the ages of 7-14 who can read but don’t, are what we refer to as Reluctant Readers. Every school in the nation is filled with reluctant readers, and more join the ranks every year. Most kids today have loads of books on their shelves, and that’s where they stay – unopened and lonely. The typical modern-day youngster spends most of his time watching TV, playing video games, surfing the net, going to various kinds of lessons, and participating in adult-sponsored, organized games. They have very little time to simply kick back and lose themselves in a good book. And if they do have the time, they don’t have the interest. They have not been “hooked” onto books.

Transforming (or reforming) a reluctant reader is not an easy task, but it is doable – particularly when the teacher and parent work together. Because this is a parenting site, we’ll concentrate primarily on the things mom and/or dad can do to ensure success. But keep in mind, the teacher can and should be involved in the process. Be sure to ask for her input and help, and be prepared to do your part as well.

The first and most important thing you can do is to **establish a mandatory, daily reading time in your home**. Yes, I know you’re thinking, “This lady is out of touch with today’s kid. There is no way my child will stand for that regime.” Well, he probably

won't stand for it. Go ahead and let him sit. This is one of those times when you may need to practice Tough Love. In fact, you probably will have to practice it if you really and truly want to entice your reluctant reader into the wonderful world of books.

There are a few guidelines to keep in mind when you embark on a required daily reading program. Mandatory reading time should not be lengthy. Fifteen minutes is sufficient. The time slot should precede the fun activities, occur at the same time every day (including weekends and summers), and be uninterrupted by telephone calls from friends. ("I'll take your number and he'll return your call in a few minutes.") Exceptions should be granted only for compelling reasons, and only on rare occasions.

Initially, expect your reluctant reader to pout (after he has yelled and gotten nowhere) and just stare at one page for fifteen minutes. But...hang in there. After a few days he will tire from the monotony of just glaring at you (you won't notice) or staring at his book. He'll start to read!

If at all possible, make your child's mandatory reading time a FAMILY READING TIME. It is not realistic (or fair) to expect your reluctant reader to become absorbed in the pages of a book while the rest of the family is hooting and hollering over a favorite TV sit-com. Although this practice may feel uncomfortable and less than enjoyable at the onset, it will improve with time. Try it. I think you'll like it. And if you don't like it, consider it a cost of parenting!

A few more suggestions to help to ensure a successful transformation:

- **Allow your reluctant reader to choose subject matter that suits his taste, not yours.** Once he's hooked on reading material he likes, he can be moved (slowly and gently) into better literature. Remember, you must hook a fish before you reel it in. The hook for the reluctant reader is a topic that interests him.
- **Give a book as a gift.** The simple act of wrapping a book in an appealing manner, and presenting it for a special occasion sends a strong message to your child. It tells him you value reading, and feel its rewards are precious enough to share.
- **Appeal to his vanity.**

Every child likes to see his name or picture in the newspaper. Do you think he would be thrilled (and motivated to read another book) if he saw his own book review and *his* name posted on the World Wide Web? Ah, yes. There's no doubt about it! Book Nook is one of many web sites where kids are allowed (and encouraged) to write book reviews. You can find others by using your search engine and entering "student book reports." An old Chinese proverb says, "Your skills will accomplish what the force of many cannot." I believe this is true for the reluctant reader and his parent. The love, the modeling, and the concern of a parent can accomplish what the force of many teachers cannot.

*In 2001, Jacquie McTaggart retired from a 42-year teaching career and began to write about her passion - kids and learning. Several of her articles have been published in national magazines and on the Internet. She also writes weekly columns on education for two daily newspapers. You can find her online at [The Teacher's Desk](#).*

**Valuable Resources:**

- [Book Adventure.com](#)
- [We Read.org-Online Talking Books](#)
- [Bonding Through Book: The Boys' Way](#)
- [Succeed To Read](#)
- [Guys Read.com](#)
- [Activities Worksheet.pdf](#)
- [25 Ideas to Motivate Young Readers](#)

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## **Quality Time With Your Child**

There is nothing more important than spending time with your child. Children need the togetherness with their parents to reconnect, resolve conflicts and improve communication. As we approach the holidays, take some time out of your schedule to do some fun things with your child(ren). Turn off the television and give your child that time. You can play games, have a family discussion, or even cook together. It's not about finding the time, but making it your priority. If you are not talking to your child, than who is? Family time can help build a more open relationship between you and your child. Allow your child to talk about what is going on in his/her life and listen attentively. Give your child all your attention and do not seem distracted or uninterested.

If you have more than one child, give each child a day each month to have a "date". During this time, you and your child will focus on your child's life. Let siblings know that they will have a day with you too. Give your child the opportunity to plan the day. Don't just impose your views. Have your child share in the activity planning. Make the time together enjoyable. This is not the time to bring up past mistakes or be resentful. Your quality time is about getting to know each other better.

Valuable Resources:

- [Is Family Mealtime Important?](#)
- [What's For Dinner.net](#)
- [Family Time Ideas](#)
- [Give Your Children The Gift of Time](#)

