

CHILD-PARENT-RELATIONSHIP (C-P-R) TRAINING

Esteem Building Responses:

Developing Your Child's Sense of Competence - Session 7

👉 **Rule of Thumb:** "Never do for a child that which he can do for himself."

When you do, you rob your child of the joy of discovery and the opportunity to feel competent.

You will never know what your child is capable of unless you allow him to try!

Parents help their child develop a positive view of "self," not only by providing their child with love and unconditional acceptance, but also by helping their child feel competent and capable. Parents help their child feel competent and capable by first allowing the child to **experience** what it is like to discover, figure out, and problem-solve. Parents show faith in their child and their child's capabilities by allowing him to struggle with a problem, all the while providing encouragement (encouragement vs. praise is covered in detail in Session 8). For most parents, allowing children to struggle is hard—but a necessary process for children to truly feel capable. The next step in helping children develop a positive view of self as competent and capable is learning to respond in ways that give children credit for ideas, effort, and accomplishments, without praising.

Esteem-Building Responses to Use in Play Sessions:

"You did it!"	"You decided that was the way that was supposed to fit together."
"You figured it out."	"You know just how you want that to look."
"You like the way that turned out."	"You're not giving up—you're determined to figure that out."
"You decided..."	"You've got a plan for how..."

Example 1: Child works and works to get the lid off the playdough and finally gets it off.
Parent response: "You did it."

Example 2: Child works and works to get the lid off the playdough, but can't get it off.
Parent response: "You're determined to figure that out."

Example 3: Child struggles to get the dart to fit into the gun and pushed in all the way and finally gets it in.
Parent response: "You figured it out."

Example 4: Child spends time drawing, cutting, and gluing a nondescript piece of "art" and shows you with a smile when he is finished.
Parent response: "You really like the way that turned out."

Example 5: Child is carefully setting up army soldiers and telling you all about a battle that is going to take place, what is going to happen, and how one side is going to sneak up, and so forth.
Parent response: "You've got a plan for how that side is..." or "You've got that all planned out."

Note: If your child tends to ask you to do things for him without trying first, ask the therapist to role-play how to return responsibility to your child to do things he is capable of figuring out for himself.

The Struggle to Become a Butterfly: A True Story (Author Unknown)

A family in my neighborhood once brought in two cocoons that were just about to hatch. They watched as the first one began to open and the butterfly inside squeezed very slowly and painfully through a tiny hole that it chewed in one end of the cocoon. After lying exhausted for about 10 minutes following its agonizing emergence, the butterfly finally flew out the open window on its beautiful wings.

The family decided to help the second butterfly so that it would not have to go through such an excruciating ordeal. So, as it began to emerge, they carefully sliced open the cocoon with a razor blade, doing the equivalent of a Caesarean section. The second butterfly never did sprout wings, and in about 10 minutes, instead of flying away, it quietly died.

The family asked a biologist friend to explain what had happened. The scientist said that the difficult struggle to emerge from the small hole actually pushes liquids from deep inside the butterfly's body cavity into the tiny capillaries in the wings, where they harden to complete the healthy and beautiful adult butterfly.

Remember: WITHOUT THE STRUGGLE, THERE ARE NO WINGS!