Setting Realistic Expectations for Children & Adolescents

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A walk down memory lane

- When I was my child’s age______________

- My parents would______________________________

- Looking back, I think________________________
What are Expectations?

- The art or state of expecting (Merriam-Webster)
  - Latin *exspectare* to look forward to

- You can help your child gain self-confidence by providing unconditional love and **setting realistic expectations**
Children with a positive yet realistic view of themselves, can be more positive about others, and makes room for their needs.

When a child suffers from low self-esteem he's easily threatened. Low self-esteem occurs if a child is held to unreasonable expectations that go beyond his developmental stage; he is bound to fail.

An overconfident child's belief in his abilities surpasses reality. He may trying to make up for underlying insecurities or that he is valued for his achievements rather than for who he is.
How do I know if my expectations are realistic?

- Start by checking your expectations with the basic facts of child development.
  - Are you setting appropriate standards of achievement?
  - Does your child clearly understand how you want her to behave?
  - Do you have realistic, clear rules for behavior?
  - Does your child clearly understand the rules?
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Oral Sensory (Birth-12-18 months)

- **Trust vs. Mistrust**
  - The important event in this stage is feeding.
  - the infant will develop a sense of trust only if the parent or caregiver is responsive and consistent with the basic needs being met.
  - The need for care and food must be met with comforting regularity.
  - The infant must first form a trusting relationship with the parent or caregiver, otherwise a sense of mistrust will develop.
Muscular-Anal-(18 months-3 years)

**Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt**

- Self control and self confidence begin to develop at this stage.
- Children can do more on their own.
- Toilet training is the most important event at this stage.
- They begin to feed and dress themselves. This is how the toddler strives for autonomy.
- It is important for parents not to be overprotective at this stage.
- A parent's level of protectiveness will influence the child's ability to achieve autonomy.
- If a parent is not reinforcing, the child will feel shameful and will learn to doubt his or her abilities.
Latency (6-12 years)

● Industry vs. Inferiority
  ● the child learns to master the more formal skills of life:
    ● 1) relating with peers according to rules
    ● 2) progressing from free play to play that may be elaborately structured by rules and may demand formal teamwork, such as baseball and
    ● 3) mastering social studies, reading, arithmetic. Homework is a necessity, and the need for self-discipline increases yearly.
  ● The child who, because of his successive and successful resolutions of earlier psychosocial crisis, is trusting, autonomous, and full of initiative will learn easily enough to be industrious.
  ● However, the mistrusting child will doubt the future. The shame - and guilt-filled child will experience defeat and inferiority.
Adolescence (12-18 years)

- Identity vs. Role Confusion
  - During adolescence, the child, now an adolescent, learns how to answer satisfactorily and happily the question of “Who am I?”
  - He comes to experiment with different - usually constructive - roles rather than adopting a "negative identity" (such as delinquency).
  - In later adolescence, clear sexual identity - manhood or womanhood - is established.
  - The adolescent seeks leadership (someone to inspire him), and gradually develops a set of ideals.
Developmental Facts

- Physically
  - Although all teens develop, they do not all follow the same timeline!
  - Sensitive about weight
  - Concerns about development

- Emotionally/Socially
  - Parents (mothers; conflict-puberty)
  - More friends (More time with friends; phone)
  - Sexuality- questions
  - Involvement in multiple activities
  - Argumentative
  - Not be seen with parents in public
How do I know if my expectations are realistic?

- **Run a Check on Your Current Expectations**
  - Ask yourself these questions:
    - Why do I have this expectation?
    - Where did it come from?
    - Is it based on my wishes or my child’s needs?
    - Does it realistically fit this particular child...at this age...with her temperament and background?
    - What purpose does it serve?
    - Am I being fair?
- **Weed out the expectations that have no meaning for your child at his or her stage of development.**
References

Whatever we expect with confidence becomes our own self-fulfilling prophecy. – Bryan Tracy