

Value Every KidIdeas for Parents

Young people need meaningful, valuable roles at home, at school, in the community, and in all the places where they spend time. They also need to feel safe. When children and youth feel safe and valued, they're more apt to bond with their families, their schools, and their communities. They then become even more valuable because they want to contribute.

Empowerment—the sense that you can make a difference and that you have a valued place or role—starts at home and starts slowly. What makes your child feel valued? What unique skills and talents does your child have to offer? What meaningful, age appropriate roles does your child have in your family?

And what about you? How do you as a parent feel empowered? What made you feel valuable when you were a child? A teenager? How can you translate your experience into creating a home that empowers your children?

Even if you don't know the answers to all of these questions, begin today with one thing you do know about empowerment. Start small. You can help your child feel more valued and valuable today.

Tips that make empowering your child easier:

- ★ Have regular family meetings to plan, solve problems, and encourage each other. Rotate who leads the meetings.
- ★ Get involved with your child's school and in the community.
- ★ Think of yourself as your child's empowerment coach.
- ★ Advocate that your community develop meaningful opportunities for young people.

Empowerment through the Years: Ways to Empower your Child

Ages 6-10

- Ask children how they would like to help others, and figure out simple ways for them to carry through on their wishes.
- Use the buddy system. When children go out to play, have them do so in pairs.
- Ask children what they do and do not like in their daily routines.
- Make some changes based on their comments.
- Display or use things your child makes.

Ages 11-15

- Discuss with your child her or his fears and feelings of not being safe. Work together on these. Be ready for concerns to range from safety at school to safety on dates.
- Ask your child for ideas on family community service projects. Act on your child's ideas.
- Laugh at your child's jokes.

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Empowerment

The more a young person is valued and feels valuable, the more likely he or she is to grow up healthy.



“Each child deserves to be acknowledged and cherished for the qualities that make her [or him] unique.”

– Lee Salk, Ph.D., author of *Familyhood*

4 Key Areas of Empowerment

Search Institute researchers have identified four empowerment assets that are crucial for helping young people grow up healthy. Check the areas of strength in your child's life:

Community values youth

Your child perceives that adults in the community value children and youth.

Youth as resources

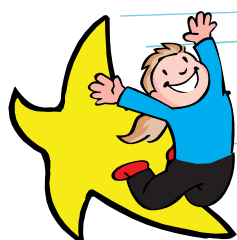
Your child is given useful roles in the community.

Service to others

Your child serves in the community one hour or more per week.

Safety

Your child feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.



VALUE EVERY KID

Raising healthy, caring, responsible children

For more information,
visit www.everykid.on.ca

