Raising them up
Self-esteem, high expectations and Deaf Children
Roger and Sherry Williams

Self-esteem
• How you feel about yourself
  – Ability to act independently and responsibly
  – Handle frustrations
  – Tackle challenges and obstacles
  – A sense of pride in accomplishments
### Social Emotional Development

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- **Integrity v Despair**
- **Generativity v Stagnation**
- **Intimacy v Isolation**
- **Identity v Role Confusion**
- **Deaf vs. Hearing**
- **Requirement of Educational Failure**
- **Lack of Internalization of Societal Norms**
- **Shame-based perspective on self and “disability”**

**Elements of self-esteem**

- Sense of Connectiveness
- Sense of Uniqueness
- Sense of Power
- Sense of Models

*(Clemes & Bean, 1981)*
Cultural Competence for Hearing Parents of Deaf Children
Roger Williams

Sense of Connectiveness

- Relationships, within the family and within the community
  - Physical contact and facial expressions
  - Praise specific behaviors
  - Communication rules for the family
  - Explain family members’ relationships
  - Connection with the Deaf community

(Jambor & Elliott, 2005)

Sense of Uniqueness

- Child knows what makes them different and special, while respecting the same in others
  - Encourage creativity
  - Recognize the child as a complete person, not just their audiogram
  - Strength-based perspective
  - Support individuation from parent
Sense of Power

- Ericson called this competency, a sense of ability to change their world
  - Develop responsibility for own behavior and feelings
  - Encourage risk-taking
  - Pick your battles! Allow failure
  - Encourage independence in resolving communication issues
  - Age appropriate expectations

Sense of Models

- Ensure the child has examples of the behaviors you desire
  - You are the first, and the most influential, model.
  - Demonstrate your thoughts about hearing loss.
  - Have clear expectations
  - Define what you believe and help your child do the same
  - Use the connections discussed earlier to identify role models (both young and old)
• “High achievement always takes place in the framework of high expectation.” ~ Charles F. Kettering

• “Believe you can and you’re halfway there.” ~ Theodore Roosevelt

Elements of self-esteem

• Sense of Connectiveness
• Sense of Uniqueness
• Sense of Power
• Sense of Models

• How can YOU as parents help your child develop good self-esteem? What kind of support can you provide?
High Expectations

• A three-way partnership –
  – Parents
  – Teachers
  – Students

Elements of high expectations

• Communication
• Self-determination
• Self-advocacy
• Support
Communication

• Start as early as possible
• Read with your child daily
• Give them regular chores at home
• Encourage them to volunteer in the community
• Work with the school to clarify expectations

Self-Determination

• Encourage your child to think about the future
• Use goals, both short-term and long-term
• Give your child choices
• Explore options
Self-Advocacy

- Require age appropriate independence
  - Don’t “jump in” to interpret
- Encourage your child to advocate for himself at his IEP meetings

Support

- Give support to your child at home
  - listen to his concerns
  - encourage him to think of solutions
  - provide positive feedback
- Maintain contact with the school staff
- Help your child connect with peers
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The Williams’ Family

References


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Resources

- [www.dawnsign.com](http://www.dawnsign.com) – A good source for books, publications and other materials
- [www.deafchildren.org](http://www.deafchildren.org) – The home page for American Society for Deaf Children