

# Courage, Determination, Perseverance, Persistence, etc.

By whatever name you choose, it is an essential ingredient in growing up. It's what propels us to reach new milestones starting with learning to walk to learning cursive writing. These ordinary tasks may seem difficult and the effort seems hard or painful, but with encouragement most children acquire these skills.

**Courage is the ability to take action despite fear of failure or negative outcomes. This quality gives us the strength to face the challenges both great and small that confront us daily.**

Sometimes physical challenges, like jumping into a pool, or riding a bike may seem impossible because we fear to make an attempt because of possible ridicule from our peers. How do we inspire our kids to rise to the challenges they face growing up?

## **Build Confidence**

A child learning to walk will frequently fall, but gets up and tries again. The drive to master new skills exists despite possible fears of getting hurt. Confronting physical challenges, like learning to run or skate helps a young child to feel more capable to take on future challenges.

Encourage a child's independence a little bit at a time. Always compliment a child when he tries a new activity. Don't hover over them protectively — let them try on their own and standby ready to wipe away tears, put band aids on scrapes, and ice packs on bruises.

## **Overcome Fear**

When kids begin to imagine things that aren't there, they start to worry about ghosts or become afraid of the dark. This is a sign that their cognitive abilities are developing. At this point, their courage and independence might need a booster shot.

Adults can help kids harness their vivid imaginations to help them overcome fear. You might give a child who is afraid of monsters "monster charm," or keep bad dreams away by creating a bedtime incantation. Help your child express their fear instead of becoming paralyzed by it.

## **Face the Unknown**

Children want to become independent and confront unexpected challenges. It helps child to prepare for independence by role-playing possible situations such as their first day at school.

Familiarize your child with the challenges. Walk them through what might be expected and let them express their ideas on how to handle different scenarios. For example - When a child walks into a classroom for the first time, he/she will face a host of unknowns:

- Will the teacher be nice?
- Will be able make new friends?
- Will schoolwork be hard?

By discussing these questions, a child learns to deal with these fears and gains the courage to face the unknown.

## **Doing the Right Thing**

A part of the growing process is to become aware of boundaries and gain an awareness of others' perspectives. This involves a sense of right and wrong, and the courage to do the right thing despite fear of negative consequences.

## **Role-playing**

A helpful technique is to assume the role what to do if the see another child being teased or bullied or an unpopular child to play in a playground game is the last to be chosen. Practice some scenarios that might arise if your child is pressured by friends to do something he feels is wrong.

**Whenever a family member does something hard, make a certificate for the fears they faced (e.g., Mom learned to send emails; Dad conquered his fear of public speaking; child performed a forward summersault).**

### **Set a Good Example**

The ways in which moms and dads deal with illness or loss can influence how their kids behave. Your child will imitate your behavior. When your child falls down or gets hurt, do you remain calm and help or do you panic and provide no positive assistance?

### **How to Help**

When difficulties come up in your own life, try not to lose it; instead, take a deep breath and talk about how you'll solve the problem. And when you take a stand for what's right, although it's unpopular, you provide an example that kids remember.

### **Avoid Foolish Bravado**

Courage does not mean taking unnecessary chances or neglecting safety. Kids need to balance physical courage with common sense--that there's a difference between dangerous showing off, such as skateboarding down a flight of stairs and taking calculated risks, like practicing jumps in a skateboard park. The cry "Look Ma, no hands!" is foolhardy, not courageous.

### **Courage Seems to Disappears**

Older kids need to be encouraged to take a moral stand in the face of peer disapproval. Their courage has not disappeared - it's hibernating just below the surface, but kids are keenly aware of life's injustices.

Praising your child when you observe them putting their ethical principals above popularity. Support them when he/she defends a friend for not using drugs or having unprotected sex.

### **Involve the Older Generation**

You may have a first-hand source of courageous inspiration right in the family if parents or grandparents:

- Immigrated?
- Had to deal with discrimination?
- Did they live through hard times?
- How did they cope?

Children love to listen to stories; especially ones about examples of heroic courage will have a powerful effect. Be open to discussing difficult situations your children are facing that need moral reasoning.

### **Teach Kids About Positive Heroes**

It's helpful for kids to have examples of famous people whose courageous stands had positive effects on others.

**Preteens commonly rebel against their parents, while they are increasingly come under the influence of peers. Only a teen who is very self confident will take a public stand that is likely to provoke a negative reaction from friends. However, they will quietly assert their independence by refusing to do things that violate his or her ethical sense.**

**Teenagers are capable of high level moral reasoning, although they are self-absorbed, they aware that their actions affect others, and they feel a sense of responsibility to question authority and take an independent stand on issues despite the possibility of being labeled "uncool."**