



## A Dose of Confidence

If only you could give your child a daily dose of confidence like you can give out a vitamin. Turns out you can!

### \* **Start the Day with Love**

Some kids wake up with the sun, ready to take on the day. Others snuggle down under the covers, needing a few more minutes of snoozing. Either way, when they're met with a smile and a loving "good morning," they'll warm up faster and fare better when they meet the challenges of the day. How children start the day matters.

### \* **Respond to Their Efforts**

There are many new things to learn every day at home, at school, and when socializing with friends. When kids make efforts to do their best, give them a heads up. "You practiced those spelling words and only missed one. Your hard work paid off." Encouragement keeps kids tackling the hard things like math, riding a bike, or reading a new book.

### \* **Tune In**

Checking out an anthill might sound boring (you've already seen your share), but to a child it may be amazing. When adults show interest in what kids find interesting, another confidence block is put in place. Give kids 100 percent of your time once in a while. Turn off

the TV and the computer. Put down the newspaper and make eye contact. It means a lot. Children may clamor and seem demanding on occasion, but when you think about it, they have relatively small voices in a world seeking our attention.

### \* **Acknowledge Good Behavior**

Notice when your child does something special, such as use good manners in a restaurant, do homework, or feed the dog without being asked. Saying "Thanks!" is a great way to reinforce the behavior you want.

### \* **Avoid Comparing Children**

It's tempting to compare children to other siblings or to friends, but it's discouraging to kids and causes resentment. "Your sister never did that" is not a good way to instill confidence. Keep in mind that children are different. It would be a boring world if we were all good at the same thing!

### \* **Believe in Your Child**

Children often live up to what others think they can accomplish. That means if you think they will let you down, they just might do it!

### \* **Give the Gift of Time**

Ellen Galinsky from the Families and Work



Institute found that children love to spend time with their parents. It takes time to learn to read, and parents are a great asset in that endeavor. It's fantastic when you have the time to bake cookies, make doll clothes, or play a game, but little things build confidence, too. Watch your child's

eyes light up when you listen to his latest knock-knock joke or when you watch her show off on the jungle gym. And when children count out marbles one at a time and place them in a bucket—perhaps counting all the way to 100—now that is a confidence builder!



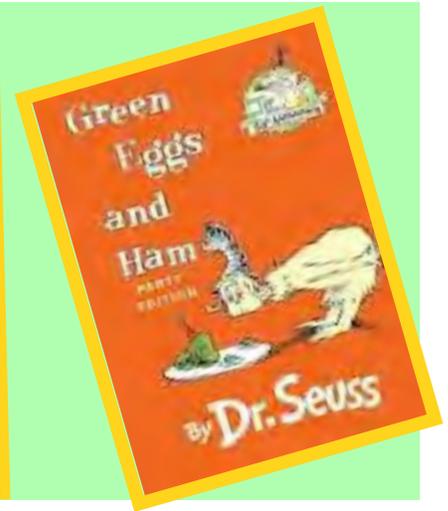
# PERSONAL PARENTING

## Happy Birthday, Dr. Seuss!

Dr. Seuss was born on March 2, 1904. His books of rhyme have helped so many children learn to read, and have been read by so many parents to their children, that it's difficult to imagine life without them.

### Three Fun Facts

1. One in four American children receive a Dr. Seuss book as their first book.
2. Green Eggs and Ham has only 50 words!
3. Sometimes Dr. Seuss would write for hours, actually wearing a thinking cap!



## Hula-Hoop Fun!

Hula-hoops have been around since 1959—100 million were sold within the first two years. It's still a favorite toy! It's a great choice, because it provides lots of exercise. And there are many things you can do with one.

- Set a timer and see how long you can twirl the Hula-hoop.
- Get a group together and see who can Hula-hoop the longest.
- Hang a Hula-hoop from a tree limb and throw a beanbag through it.
- Stand the Hula-hoop on end and see how far it will roll.
- Place Hula-hoops on the ground and jump in and out of them.

## Cherry Cheesecakes

Children have fun cooking, and this treat is very easy to make.

### Ingredients:

- 18 vanilla wafers
- 2 8-oz. packages cream cheese
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract



Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Place one vanilla wafer in the bottom of each hole in an 18-hole muffin pan. In a large bowl, add the cream cheese, sugar, eggs, and vanilla and beat with an electric mixer for 5 minutes. Spoon the mixture over the vanilla wafers. Place a spoonful of cherry pie filling on top of the cheese mixture. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes. Cool on a wire rack. Store in the refrigerator. Makes 18 cheesecakes.

## Shake It Up



If a bottle of medicine has the words “Shake before using” on the label, be sure to follow the instructions. If you don't shake it, you won't get an even dosing since the most potent particles tend to settle at the bottom.

## Monster Muck (Slime)

This recipe takes a few ingredients that are probably in your cupboard. The slimy stuff is so much fun for children—they try to hang on to it, but it keeps slip-sliding away.

- 1/3 cup water
- Green food coloring (optional)
- 3/4 cup cornstarch

Put water in a bowl with a few drops of coloring. Slowly add cornstarch. Do not stir. Let set for a minute or two. Slime feels fabulously messy and sort of solid, but looks like liquid.



# Setting Limits with Love

**W**hen you're raising children, setting limits is inevitable. In order to keep kids safe, parents must create boundaries, but children often resist. In fact, that's the way it works: Parents set boundaries, and children see how far they can stretch them. A seven-year-old cannot ride her bike without a helmet, but she might try it. A four-year-old cannot take the dog for a walk alone, but he might try it. A two-year-old isn't allowed to color all over the walls, but he just did.

**Act as soon as you can:** This gives your child an opportunity to associate the misbehavior with the consequence.

**Be respectful:** Focus on the behavior, not your child. "I don't like it when you interrupt me when I'm on the phone." You are separating the action from the person. The goal is to teach acceptable behavior, not make your child feel bad.

**Be brief:** Children stop listening when parents go on and on. "I'll expect you to get ready to leave the park when I give you a five-minute warning." You are briefly telling them the plan and your expectations.

**Be fair:** Fit the consequence to the behavior. A consequence for coloring on the wall should be totally different for a two-year-old than for a school-age child. If your three-year-old keeps beating on the drum when you've requested quiet time, take away the drum for the time being, but don't take it away for a week. Let him have another opportunity to act appropriately with the drum.

**Follow through:** It's confusing to children if a rule is enforced some of the time but ignored other times.

**Respond, don't react:** You can't ground your child for an eternity or take away privileges forever, even though that was your threat. Parents usually have a few minutes to respond when children misbehave, and those few minutes are a gift. Before blurting out something you'll be sorry for, take a moment to think about what you're trying to teach your child. It's okay for parents to take a time-out. It's also okay to say, "I'm sorry I got so angry" or "I need to think about this for a moment."

**Wipe the slate clean:** Don't let anyone go to bed in tears or with a heavy heart. Children make mistakes. They also can push parents to the boiling point. But when the day has ended, it's important to give hugs and set the stage for starting fresh in the morning.

