



Be Your Child's Greatest Cheerleader

By Van Walton

Encouraging your child helps to build his or her self-esteem and confidence, and makes them feel loved and very special. Here are ten ways to become your child's greatest cheerleader:

1. Mail a letter of encouragement with a coupon for ice cream or an extra 30 minutes of electronic game playing. Ask your child to get the mail that day.
2. Decorate their bedroom door or bathroom mirror. Include an appropriate Bible verse. A picture of your child is a nice addition. Use words like "A winner resides within" or "I'm a champion!"
3. Fold down his bedspread one night, like in a posh hotel, and place a note or a mint on the pillow.
4. Prepare her favorite meal the day she turns in a difficult project.
5. Greet your child after school with a ready-to-play game on the coffee table. Give undivided attention as you put aside everything else and just play.
6. Bring out the "YOU ARE SPECIAL" plate for an after-school snack.
7. Take warm cookies and milk, or a bowl of popcorn and lemonade, to your child while he is studying.
8. Buy a key chain with a frame and place your child's picture in it.
9. Award a blue ribbon (craft stores stock them) at the dinner table for a good deed, character, or "just because."
10. Tell your child that, although you are delighted with hard work, you value your child and love her because she is yours. (Always rewarding good grades and hard work creates a salvation-by-works mentality.)

And remember to always greet your child with a happy face, give lots of hugs, and say, "I love you" often.