

Building Strong Families

Ways to Build Self-Awareness and Self-Esteem

Let Your Children Have the Right Amount of Control

- **Try to balance giving children too much control and not giving them enough.** A child with too much control can feel alone and not safe. A child with no control can feel powerless and not good enough.
- **Give your children the chance to choose when they are able to.** This helps them find out what they like and dislike. It also helps them learn how to make decisions.

“So Many Choices!”

Directions:

The chart on the next page will help you look at some jobs and activities your children may have control over. The charts will also help you plan how you can give your children more control as they get older.

If you have more than one child, ask for a copy of the chart. Fill out a chart for each child.

Write the child’s name at the top of the chart. Write the child’s current age. Then, write the age of that child 5 years from now.

Now look at the list of activities or jobs on the left. For each activity, think about whether you are mostly uncomfortable or comfortable with your child doing the activity now and also 5 years from now. For each activity and each age, put a check mark in the “Uncomfortable” or the “Comfortable” column.

For example, if your daughter is 4 years old, you may feel uncomfortable about letting her choose what to have for dinner now, but comfortable about her doing it when she is 5 years older (age 9). So for this activity, you would have two checks, one in the “Uncomfortable” column under “Age now” and the other in the “Comfortable” column under “Age + 5 years.”

As children get older, they can do more activities themselves. So you will probably notice more checks under “Comfortable” in the “Age + 5 years” column than in the “Age now” column.

Name of child _____ Age now ____ Age in 5 years ____

| Activity or job: | Uncomfortable | | Comfortable | |
|---|---------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | Age now | In 5 years | Age now | In 5 years |
| Choosing what to have for dinner | | | | |
| Picking out clothes to wear to school | | | | |
| Buying things at the store and counting change | | | | |
| Planning a party for friends | | | | |
| Choosing a movie to rent from the video store | | | | |
| Deciding how to spend his/her allowance/savings | | | | |
| Decorating his/her room | | | | |
| Staying home alone | | | | |
| Buying presents for friends and family | | | | |
| Ordering his/her own food at a restaurant | | | | |
| Choosing a television show to watch | | | | |