



TEACHING CHILDREN SELF CARE

BY CHARMAINE MCINTOSH, PSY.D.

Children need to practice self care too ... it helps to develop independence, build resiliency, promote a healthy lifestyle and mental health, manage and reduce stress, build self-esteem, and cultivate a sense of self.

Self care starts with dental and personal hygiene such as brushing teeth and hand washing; as well as healthy eating and a good nights sleep. Here are some examples of strategies for self care.

- Deep Breathing (a great skill for relaxing/coping)
- Mindful Meditation (increases happiness, reduces anxiety)
- Exercise (going for walks, playing a sport or catch in the backyard, take a bike ride)
- Drinking Water Every Day
- Self Regulation (helps children manage stress and difficult situations)
- Eat Meals as a Family (creates positive interactions and better relationships with parents and siblings)
- Self Expression (writing down their thoughts and feelings)
- Creativity (take a dance class, playing a musical instrument, draw, colour, paint)

- Disengage from Technology (eating with the television off, putting away gadgets at a specific time in the evening, limit screen time such as playing video games)
- Foster Social Skills (children can learn skills like active listening, cooperation, good manners, patience, sharing, being respectful)
- Engage in Family Activities (bike riding, camping)

You can have family meetings to brainstorm and get your children's ideas about self-care. It is important to teach your children self care.

Encourage them to engage in self care. Help your children create good and healthy habits for life.

References

1. Jumo Health and HealthyPsych. (2018, November 13). Self-care for kids: 8 practical ways to promote your child's mental health on a daily basis {Web blog post}. Retrieved June 21, 2019, from <https://healthypsych.com/self-care-for-kids-8-practical-ways-to-promote-your-childs-mental-health-on-a-daily-basis-2/>
2. Louis, Ashleigh. (2018, April 18). Teach your kids the value of self-care by creating healthy habits. Retrieved June 21, 2019, from <https://www.gottman.com/blog/teach-kids-self-care-creating-healthy-habits/>