

How to Help Your PERFECTIONIST CHILD

WORRY LESS AND
DO MORE



EXCELLENCE-SEEKER

- has a GROWTH mindset
- is intrinsically motivated
- focuses on learning

VS.



PERFECTIONIST

- has a FIXED mindset
- avoids judgement
- focuses on mistakes



Encourage High Standards, Not Perfection

- Avoid using the word "perfect" altogether.
- Help your child set goals and standards that are reachable with effort.



Teach Your Child "The Power of Yet"

- Add "YET" to your child's "I can't" statements.
- Use the 3-step strategy:
 1. Ask them to create a DRAFT
 2. Acknowledge what they did WELL
 3. Provide specific feedback for improvement



Be an Example of Someone Who's Not Perfect

- Model imperfection by sharing YOUR mistakes.
- Ask your child for ADVICE when you experience a setback or a struggle.



Emphasize the Fun

- Highlight enjoyment and learning when you question and praise your child.
- Ask: "Did you have fun today?"



Recognize Negative Thoughts

- Use the "balloon technique" to teach your child to let go of self-critical thoughts.
- Play the Five Senses Game to combat anxiety and feelings of doubt and blame.

More Helpful Strategies for Dealing with Perfectionism

- **Build in downtime.** It's common today for parents to overschedule their kids and push them into all sorts of activities. Make sure your child also has time each day to relax, recharge, and not worry about achievement.
- **Demonstrate unconditional love.** Ensure your child knows that your love isn't conditional on performance. Go beyond just saying this: make sure you don't *only* demonstrate excitement, interest, or pride when your child accomplishes something.
- **Be mindful of your criticism.** Children worry about their parents withdrawing approval when they disappoint or get something wrong. So be mindful of how you express criticism or frustration. Help your child evaluate his own performance and talk about how he can *improve*.
- **Be supportive.** Ask your child what he needs in order to achieve what he wants. Maybe he needs more sleep or more help from you.
- **Talk about learning from mistakes.** Remind your child that *everyone* makes mistakes and that we learn *more* from our mistakes and failures than we do from our successes.