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## Tips to help students with learning and attention issues bolster self-esteem

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[Learning specialist, Beacon College, Leesburg, Fla.]

#### Develop and nurture your interests

Your interests matter and are a fun way to learn. Learning to do things, especially doing things we enjoy, helps us feel like we have something to offer that matters. Something of worth. Even something like setting a table, or washing laundry, or playing a video game matters because we are learning how to contribute to others or our own well-being. Playing a video game teaches problem solving, motor dexterity, strategizing (thinking a step or two ahead), and consequence. It also teaches time management.

#### Guard your heart with positive talk

The way you talk to yourself, through thoughts, matters. The way people around you talk to you matters. Make sure you spend time with people who treat you with respect and do not say words that put you down or make you feel worthless. Make sure you observe this practice too. The power of positive communication, both self-talk and expressive talk in conversation impacts your overall health and wellbeing. Choose to be well because the whole community stands to benefit by that choice.

### DANA STAHL

[Author, founder Educational Alternatives, LLC]

#### Foster autonomy

Create learning environments that encourage students to independently negotiate and navigate their work. Successful completion of assigned tasks increases self-esteem.

#### Get “bite-sized”

Teach students to ‘smash the task,’ or break tasks down into manageable components. Students then develop a sense of ownership in accomplishing small segments of assignments, which lowers their anxiety, allows for successful completion of assigned tasks, and leads to improving self-esteem.

### JANET WOLFE

[Head of school at The IDEAL School of Manhattan]

#### Establish scaffolding

Appropriate scaffolding helps students with learning differences achieve and gain confidence. Such scaffolds might include written prompts, visual cues, breaking assignments into manageable pieces, and books on tape etc.

#### Go to the source

Engage children with learning differences in conversation about how they learn best. Role play with them to help them prepare language, asking for what they need. Go with them to see a teacher – but help them say what is working and what they need first.



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“A World of Difference” is produced by Beacon College. The Leesburg, Fla. liberal arts school is America’s first accredited baccalaureate institution dedicated to educating neurodiverse students with learning disabilities, ADHD, dyslexia, ASD, and other learning differences.

