

**ASK THE EXPERT QUERIES**

**Category: Shyness and Under Confidence**

**Query 1**

Dec 2014	Female	Age 14 to 18	My daughter is under confident
----------	--------	--------------------	--------------------------------

**Query by: Parent**

**Response**

Thank you for writing to us. It would be important to know more about your daughter to understand her reasons for being under confident so that you can be guided accordingly. Children could feel under confident for a number of reasons and understanding these are important before something is suggested. Is she under confident in certain aspects of life e.g. in school, with the family, friends, about her appearance, skills and abilities etc.? How does the under confidence show in her behavior? What have you done to address it? Has she always been like this or do you feel that she has changed after some incident or life circumstance? What are the current life stressors in your family and her life?

**Query 2**

Feb 2015	Male	Age 09 to 13	My son studying in Class - IV is hard working student and obedient and also very shy in his class as well as with outsider people and not to share anything with his colleagues, however he is very well with his brothers in home. Since last two years I notice that he is behaving very odd. He does not seem to be paying attention to his work and is not getting very good grades. He seems disturbed and preoccupied. My husband and I have given him a detailed lecture on the importance of his studies. He listens and agrees but we don't see any progress. What can I do to help him and also to take good manner?
----------	------	--------------------	--

**Query by: Parent**

**Response**

Something appears to be bothering your son, which is affecting his work and grades. It would thus be important to address the reasons behind the inability to concentrate and study rather than the studies itself. There could be a number of reasons contributing to this change such as problems with the peers at school, bullying, issues with the teachers, inability to understand a subject, stressors due to problems at home. You mentioned that he is generally shy and that might make it more difficult to for him to openly communicate and share what is bothering him.

Talk to him in an open, calm and friendly manner and share your observations about the changes you have noticed in him. Let him know that he can share anything that bothers him and that you will listen and support him without putting any blame. Once he starts to open up, help him deal with the situation accordingly, by both validating feelings that are normal and by helping him develop positive coping skills. Once the underlying issue bothering him is discussed and resolved, he will most likely be able to get back to concentrating on his studies.

**Query 3**

Mar 2015	Male	Age 14 to 18	How should the confidence of a child increases??
----------	------	--------------------	--

**Query by: Unspecified**

**Response:**

Children’s confidence can be raised through a number of measures. It is important though to understand the possible reasons for under confidence experienced by the child, so that more efforts can be made to address those reasons. Some of the things that parents can do to help build confidence include:

- Praise your child for the little efforts, hard work, qualities and traits
- Allow him/her an opportunity to explore interests and develop skills and abilities in those areas
- Normalize feelings related to failures and help him/her identify ways of dealing with the weaknesses
- Keep expectations age appropriate as well as to a level that the child can handle. Check your own unrealistic expectations about how the child should look, behave and what he/she should achieve.
- Set limits and discipline the child through respectful measures instead of resorting to put downs, insults and corporal punishment
- Respect individual difference and avoid comparison with other siblings, cousins etc.
- Listen to the child’s needs and explore reasons that maybe making the child feel under confident e.g. bullying in school, inability to attain the grades he/she is aiming for, stressors at home, a change in life circumstances etc. Help him/her work through these feelings and develop skills to deal with the different situations.

**Query 4**

Mar 2015	Female	Age 06 to 08	Shy
----------	--------	--------------------	-----

**Query by: Unspecified**

**Response:**

The information provided by you is insufficient for us to provide you with any concrete guidance. Kindly share if she has always been shy or that this behavior has developed recently. Also let us know if she is shy in front of certain people or situations or in almost all the situations. A better understanding of the behavior will help guide you better

**Query 5, 6 & 7**

Mar 2015	Male	Age 06 to 08	How can we over come her shyness in class ,as she can not participate in class discussion ,knowing every thing well(92-99 % results in academics)
Mar 2015	Female	N.A	how can i help my daughter to increase her confidence level and finish off her shyness?
Mar 2015	Male	N.A	my son don't talk in school but he is very active in home he is very shy boy in outside of home

--	--	--	--

**Queries by: Parents**

**Response:**

Some children tend to be shy than others and one can work with children to help them overcome the shyness. Is the issue of shyness specifically related to speaking during the class discussion or does she also have difficulty in making friends and interacting with class children or in any new situation etc.? There is no single strategy that you can use and you can try some or all of the strategies listed below and see which one works the best:

- Evaluate your own parenting style and see you or your spouse put too much expectations on her, are harsh in disciplining, resort to physical punishments etc. Ensure that firm and friendly ways of parenting and disciplining are being used.
- Explore your daughter’s main fears underlying the shyness so that these can be focused on.
- Ensure that there is no bullying or teasing occurring at school that might be making her feel shy.
- Normalize her feelings and empathize with her. Let her know of other children feeling this way and you can also tell her about your own childhood situations where you had felt shy.
- Avoid labeling the child as ‘shy’ in front of others as the child may feel further discouraged and shy.
- Help her understand the advantage of being more social, making friends and how much fun school can be if one is less shy.
- Help her think of girls and boys in her class that she can try making friends with and what she can say and do to initiate a friendship. Help her practice through role-plays, using dolls and puppets.
- Appreciate the small efforts she makes to overcome her shyness.
- Invite her class fellows over to the house to give her an opportunity to play and interact with them in the comfort of her house.
- Ask the teacher to have her sit with a student who is friendly and talkative.

**Query 8**

Aug 2015	Male	Age 03 to 05	y child is very shy kind of pupil he never explain his problems to teacher what should I do?
----------	------	--------------	--

**Query by: Parent**

**Response:**

He is very young and in the process of developing social skills. Some level of shyness at this age is very normal and children exhibit individual differences in this regard.

In general, some of the ways by which you can help him and other children of your class, build their confidence and overcome shyness are:

- Encourage him and other children to ask questions in the class and let children know that there is no ‘wrong’ or ‘silly’ question. This helps children open up and feel more comfortable and less conscious.
- Praise him and other children for their efforts, hard work, qualities and traits.
- Normalize feelings related to failures and let children know that it is okay to make mistakes.
- Make sure your own expectations from the children of your class are age appropriate as well as to a level that they can handle.
- Set limits and discipline children through respectful measures instead of resorting to put downs, insults and corporal punishment.
- Respect individual difference and avoid comparison with other children.

- Listen to this child’s needs and explore reasons that maybe making him feel under confident e.g. bullying in school, stressors at home, a change in life circumstances etc.

**Query 8**

Aug 2015	Male	Age 14 to 18	My Son is studying in matric. He is a good student in studies, but main problem is, he is not confident. He knows the correct answers but never share them with the teacher with this fear that if the answer would be wrong then teacher will get angry or students will start laughing, I know his all the teachers. they all are good and very friendly to him, but i dont know why he is lacking in confidence. Even at home he listens to everyone, but do not respond and think with his own mind. he is very passive in nature
----------	------	--------------------	---

**Query by: Parent**

**Response:**

Children’s confidence can be raised through a number of measures. It is important though to understand the possible reasons for under confidence experienced by the child, so that more efforts can be made to address those reasons. Some of the things that parents can do to help build confidence include:

- Praise your child for the little efforts, hard work, qualities and traits
- Allow him/her an opportunity to explore interests and develop skills and abilities in those areas
- Normalize feelings related to failures and help him/her identify ways of dealing with the weaknesses
- Teach him/her to be assertive and share their thoughts and feelings with others.
- Keep expectations age appropriate as well as to a level that the child can handle. Check your own unrealistic expectations about how the child should look, behave and what he/she should achieve.
- Set limits and discipline the child through respectful measures instead of resorting to put downs, insults and corporal punishment
- Respect individual difference and avoid comparison with other siblings, cousins etc.
- Listen to the child’s needs and explore reasons that maybe making the child feel under confident e.g. bullying in school, inability to attain the grades he/she is aiming for, stressors at home, a change in life circumstances etc. Help him/her work through these feelings and develop skills to deal with the different situations.

**Query 9**

Jan 2016	Female	Age 09 to 13	I want to be confident but naturally i am shy.I can only give short answers to teachers but if there is any big quesyon i cant give the answer in my own words. I study by myself and get good grades this time i have got 90% but my family members compares me with a girl who got 95% whose mother give her total time. I dont like this all. No one knows about this. CAN U HELP ME IN THIS SITUATION
----------	--------	--------------------	---

**Query by: Parent**

**Response:**

I want to appreciate you for writing about your concern which goes to show the effort you are putting in to become more confident. Children at your age can naturally feel awkward and shy in certain situations and there is nothing wrong in feeling this way since it is part of growing up and learning to adjust to different situations and people. Some children are also naturally shyer

than others owing to individual differences. Some of the things that you can try to help improve your confidence are as follows:

- First identify situations and persons around whom you feel most shy and then try finding out reasons for this shyness. Once you know what it is about the person or situation that makes you awkward, you will be in a better position to figure out what to do about it.
- If you face difficulty in initiating conversations with new people, you can try talking about a topic that you are most comfortable with and it might just get you started with the conversation.
- Stand in front of the mirror and practice looking and talking more confidently. Appropriate body language and tone can help us appear more confident.
- Learning to communicate more assertively with others and letting people who we love and care about know how we feel can also help us become more confident. People may not always like our point of view but it is important to let people know respectfully how we feel about their behavior and actions. You can become assertive by first thinking about what it is that you do not like and then through a confident body language and tone, use an I-statement to communicate your thoughts and feelings. Examples of an I-statement would be, '*I work hard and do not like being constantly compared to other students*', or '*I do not like when you borrow things from me and never return them on time*'. Give it a try and see how it goes. Some people may not like you being assertive as they tend to get used to children not speaking up but sooner or later they will realize that you were not disrespectful and rude and just communicating a point of view.
- Check your own expectations from yourself in terms of how you should act and be in different situations. Sometimes we tend to have unrealistic expectations from ourselves and thus put ourselves down. Make sure you are not doing that to yourself.

Good luck and keep practicing since the change may not happen right away!