

Parents, Help your Children Find Their Voice!

Have you ever spoke to a child and they look like a deer in the headlights? You're asking questions and they just stare at you? Parents, we need to teach our children to have a voice. Instead of speaking for your child, stand back and patiently wait for your child to speak for themselves.

Children need practice in finding their voice and having an opinion. The place to start is at home. You can start by asking your child questions. Look directly at your child and ask a question. Give them time to think about it and then answer. LISTEN to your child. Teach them to look directly at you and to use their voice. Encourage your child to express themselves every day and to express their opinions. Let them order their food at restaurants. Daily practice can boost a child confidence.

Parents need to discuss moral issues, world issues, peer pressure, and beliefs. A great opportunity to start teaching children to use their voice is when siblings disagree. Let them have equal time to voice their opinion. Hopefully, both parties can come to an agreement and meet in the middle. This teaches them they don't always get their way and they may have to compromise.

As we teach them to use their voice, we should also teach them to listen and respect others opinions. Emphasize that while you can't control what another person says or does, you can control your respond.

As I'm finishing this article, this song, "You've Got to Stand for Something" continues to play in my mind. The songwriter recall the life lessons taught to him by his father, who told him that he should stand up for his moral convictions. I think by helping our children find their voice, we empower them to stand up for themselves and think for themselves. Being able to communicate with others helps develop inner confidence.



Tips on Helping Your Child Develop Confidence

Adapted from: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/tips-on-helping-your-child-develop-confidence/>

Self-confidence is an essential ingredient for all aspects of your child's healthy development and a key ingredient for school success. Here's how you can help your child develop the self-confidence they need for future success.

Confidence is a belief in your ability to master your body, behavior, and the challenges you encounter in the larger world. Children who are confident are eager to learn new skills and face new challenges. They also expect adults to be helpful and supportive of their efforts. Self-confidence is also crucial for getting along with others and working out the many social challenges—such as sharing, competition, and making friends—that children face. Self-confident children see that other people like them and expect relationships to be satisfying and fun.

How does self-confidence develop? Babies are born with no real sense of themselves as separate and distinct beings. They learn who they are primarily through their interactions and experiences with others. Primary caregivers—parents, relatives, caregivers, and teachers - reflect back to children their unique strengths and special attributes. Watch how confidence grows across the first three years of life:

A newborn cries and is comforted by her parent. This baby is learning that she is loved, important, and worthy of soothing.

An 8-month-old shakes a rattle and smiles at the sound it makes. His caregiver says, "You figured out how the rattle works!" This baby is learning he is a clever problem-solver.

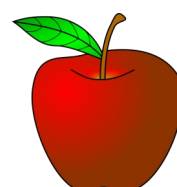
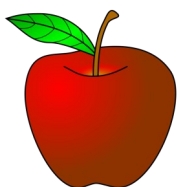
A toddler takes a stool to reach her dad's cell phone on the countertop. "I can't let you play with my phone," says the girl's father, "But how about playing with this?" He hands her a toy phone and she happily begins making calls. This toddler is learning that her interests are important and will be respected and supported (within limits) by those who love her.

A 3-year-old sobs as his parents leave for a night out on the town...without him. They help him calm down and get settled with his babysitter. This toddler is learning that his feelings are important and that his parents will listen and respond to him when he is distressed.

Here are ways you can nurture your child's self-confidence through your everyday interactions together.

Establish Routines With Your Baby or Child	When events happen in approximately the same way at approximately the same time each day, your child will feel safe, secure, confident and in control of his world. If day-to-day events seem to occur randomly, it can cause children a lot of anxiety. If life doesn't make sense, it may feel too scary to fully explore. When children know what to expect, they are free to play, grow, and learn.
Allow for and Facilitate Plenty of Play	Play is how children learn about themselves, other people, and world around them. Through play, children also learn how <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to solve problems and develop confidence.• it feels to be someone else,• to try on new roles and• to work out complicated feelings.
Help Your Child Learn to be a Problem Solver	Help your child work through problems, but don't always solve them for her. Move the blocks on the bottom of the tower so they are a little more stable, but don't put the tall one on top—let her figure out how to make it balance. This way you give her the chance to feel successful. If your child is building a block house on the rug and it keeps falling, you could: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell her that you see how frustrated she is• Ask her if she knows what may be causing the problem• Offer your observations, i.e., that the rug is soft so the blocks aren't stable• Ask if she has any ideas about what might make them steadier• Ask if she wants suggestions: "How about making it on the hard floor?" <p>The goal is to guide and support your child in her problem-solving efforts but not do for her what she has the skills to accomplish herself. Sometimes, your child's times of greatest frustration are in fact golden opportunities for her to develop feelings of confidence, competence, and mastery. She'll learn that she can depend on you to encourage her. Meanwhile, she's the one who finds the solution.</p>

Give Your Child Responsibilities	Feeling useful and needed makes children feel important and builds confidence. Jobs should be age-appropriate. Very young children can sort laundry with you, help feed pets, water plants, and pick up toys. Be specific about what is expected. Say, "Please put a napkin on each plate," not "Help me set the table."
Celebrate Your Child's Successes	Showing your child that you recognize how he is growing and learning helps to build his confidence. Make a photo album of his accomplishments. Take pictures of your child struggling to climb onto a chair, and one of your child sitting in it proudly.
Encourage Your Child to Try to Master Tasks He is Struggling With	<p>Children learn by doing. Break down difficult tasks into manageable steps to help him feel in control, confident, and safe. For example, if he is trying to learn to put his shoes on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlace his shoes and open them for him • Line them up so he can step in • Let him lean on you while he steps in • Guide his hand, if necessary, as he fastens the shoes • Tell him "Nice job getting your shoes on!" <p>As you work on a task or skill that is tough for your child, let him know you believe in him, but also communicate that you will not be disappointed if he isn't yet ready. You are there to support him whenever he is ready to try again. When children feel in control, they feel strong in the world.</p>
Provide Language for Your Child's Experiences	This should be language that accurately reflects his experience, shows understanding and empathy, and instills confidence. "You tried to pour your own juice. Good for you. Some juice is in the cup. Some spilled. You look sad about that. Here, wipe it up. That pitcher is heavy for little hands. I'll give you a smaller one and you can try again."
Be A Role Model Yourself	<p>Children are always closely watching their parents for clues about what to do or how to feel. When it comes to learning how to manage emotions like hurt, anger, or frustration, you are their "go-to" person. If you can model persistence and confidence in yourself, your child will learn this too. Try new things and praise yourself aloud. "I was really frustrated putting up that shelf. It was hard to do. When it fell, I was mad. I rested and tried again. Now I'm proud of myself for getting the job done and not giving up."</p> <p>If you can say to your child when you are angry, "I don't like that you threw that ball at me. I know you are angry and that's ok. However, throwing hurts. You can tell me why you are mad and hit this pillow if you have to do something with your body." You are not only addressing your child's behavior, and offering alternatives, but the way you are dealing with your anger gives your child a healthy model for coping with strong feelings.</p>



Let's Travel West Virginia to Find the Best Fall Foliage!

According to the West Virginia Division of Forestry, the best time to see fall colors in West Virginia is from **late September to late October**. What a great time to explore West Virginia with your family. It's during this time that destinations like Blackwater Falls, Seneca Rocks, and Dolly Sods experience peak autumn hues. You can enjoy fall colors anywhere, but West Virginia State Parks offer some of the Mountain State's best locations to see autumn's beauty.

Blackwater Falls State Park

No fall foliage list would be complete without mention of Blackwater Falls State Park. Because of its high elevation where leaves change color first, Blackwater Falls State Park is a leaf peeping destination you don't want to pass up. With breathtaking views of the Allegheny Mountains of Tucker County, waterfalls and overlooks, Blackwater Falls is one of the most photographed places in West Virginia. Add a background of beautiful autumn hues, and it becomes even more breathtaking.



Cass Scenic Railroad Historical State Park

Let's head to Cass Scenic Railroad Historical State Park. Leaves in this portion of the state will turn the last week of September or first of October. For a unique leaf peeping experience, plan to take the 4.5 hour train ride to the overlook at Bald Knob, the third highest point in West Virginia. From there, you can enjoy a spectacular view from 4,700 feet above sea level. This is not the typical fall-foliage viewing experience, and a must for leaf peepers and train enthusiasts.



Babcock State Park

The classic shot of the working grist mill against a background of fall color is on every photographer's shot list. The park even provides a webcam so visitors can track the leaves as they begin to change, so keep an eye out as you plan your trip. Foliage at Babcock State Park typically peaks around the second week of October.

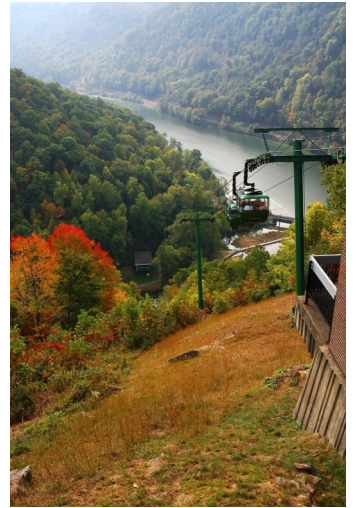


[West Virginia State Parks and Forests - Trip Planning Information - West Virginia State Parks \(wvstateparks.com\)](http://wvstateparks.com)

[West Virginia State Parks' Must See Fall Foliage Spots - West Virginia State Parks - West Virginia State Parks \(wvstateparks.com\)](http://wvstateparks.com)

Hawks Nest State Park

Take a hike to an overlook or ride the aerial tramway for a bird's eye view of the gorge with all the yellows, reds and oranges of fall below. Hawk's Nest also has a lodge where you can stay the night for even more leaf peeping fun. Fall foliage at Hawks Nest State Park usually peaks the second week of October.



Pipestem Resort State Park

Head to Pipestem Resort State Park during early October to round out your fall foliage tour of West Virginia State Parks. Pipestem is a one-of-a-kind park and offers breathtaking views of the Bluestone River Gorge from above and below.



Take Me Home, Country Roads

*Almost heaven, West Virginia
Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River
Life is old there, older than the trees
Younger than the mountains, growin' like a breeze*

*Country roads, take me home
To the place where I belong
West Virginia, mountain momma
Take me home, country roads*



*All my memories gathered 'round her
Miner's lady stranger to blue water
Dark and dusty painted on the sky
Misty taste of moonshine, teardrop in my eye*

*Country roads, take me home
To the place I belong
West Virginia, mountain momma
Take me home, country roads*



*I hear her voice, in the mornin' hour she calls me
Radio reminds me of my home far away
And driving down the road I get a feeling
I should have been home yesterday, yesterday*

*Country roads, take me home
To the place where I belong
West Virginia, mountain momma
Take me home, country roads*

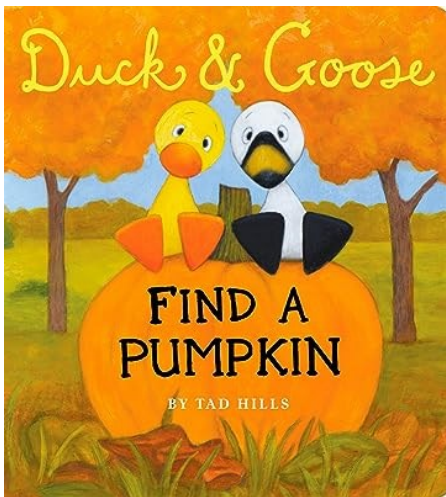
Recorded by John Denver and written by Bill Danhoff, Taffy Nivert, and John Denver



MOUNTAINHEART
Community Services, Inc.

"Together We Can"

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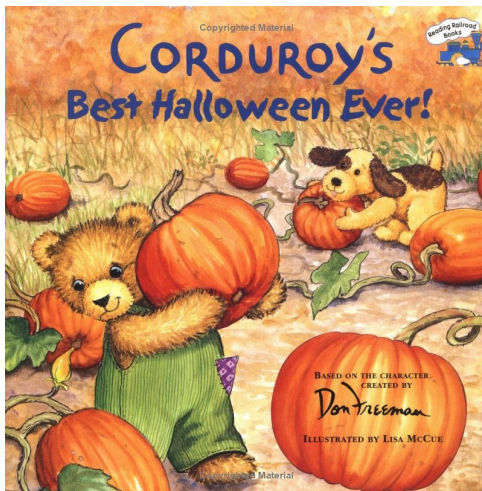
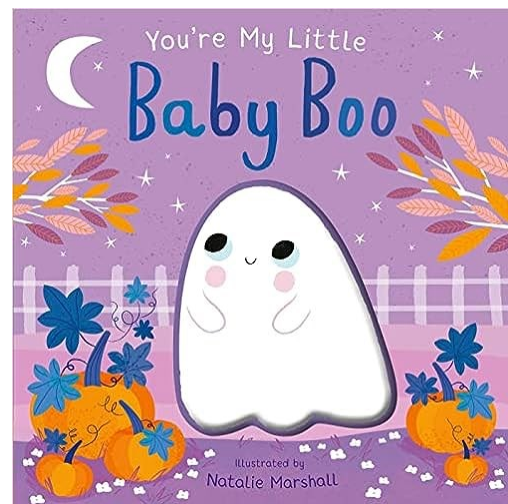
New York Times bestselling author and illustrator Tad Hills brings our favorite feathered friends out to find a big, beautiful pumpkin in this sturdy board book. Duck & Goose look everywhere for a pumpkin-in the apple tree, in the leaf pile, inside a hollow log.... Where will they find one?



You're My Little Baby Boo

by Nicola Edwards (Author),
Natalie Marshall (Illustrator)

You're My Little Baby Boo is the sweetest treat to share with the little ones in your life. This addition to the beloved You're My Little series features beautiful nighttime illustrations of iconic Halloween characters such as ghosts, pumpkins, and candy corn. Children will love the interactive features alongside the story about a parent's love for a child. This adorable board book is a wonderful bedtime story for Halloween or any time of the year.



Corduroy's Best Halloween Ever!

by Don Freeman (Author),
Lisa McCue (Illustrator)

Halloween is almost here, and Corduroy can't wait! He is going to have a party. He and his friends will carve a jack-o'-lantern, bob for apples, and go trick-or-treating! But there is one problem-Corduroy needs to choose a costume. What will he wear?



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