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CONFIDENCE

Some kids breeze through school enjoying every task, doing well on assignments, and getting good grades.

Other children may do just as well on their report card but don't enjoy the tasks of learning and worry about every assignment and test.

What's the difference between these groups of children?

Often the ones who are school worry-worts are just as smart as the others but lack CONFIDENCE in their abilities.

The way I look at it children have to go to school so they might as well enjoy it, right? How can parents help a child who lacks confidence?

Most of these school-worriers are perfectionists or shy with people or have the feeling they are not as good as their peers. These are traits of temperament that the child is born with. Parents can't change the basic personality that their child came into the world with because it is largely genetically determined.

But parents CAN help the unconfident child.

Work with the teacher to find out if the child needs extra help or tutoring. Even very bright children sometimes need a tutor to help them build their confidence.

Encourage your child to develop competencies outside of school: sports, art, music. Feeling confident comes from learning that, "I can do it!" and the more opportunities the child has to feel this way the better.

Let your child know you have high expectations but do not expect perfection of anyone, not yourself or your child.

Help your child with skills-building. Worry-worts look at an assignment and see a mountain. Show the child how to break a big task into smaller ones. Explain how the child can be sure to ace tomorrow's spelling test by self-testing -- cover up each word, write it, and check to see it is

spelled correctly. Be sure your child knows it's OK to take a break. Sometimes perfectionists are so worried they won't do well or finish their work that they actually spend too much time at their homework tasks.