



# MOTIVATING FOSTER CHILDREN DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

## DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY

- It's not about you.
- Foster children often find it very difficult to open up about their emotional pain.
- Trust is difficult to come by after a lifetime of disappointment.
- Talking about their parents may feel to them like betrayal.
- Conflicting thoughts create a disconnection between you and them.

## STRENGTHEN SELF-ESTEEM

- Encourage them to dress in a way that reflects their best image of themselves.
- Take a picture of them and put it on your refrigerator or somewhere else in your house to let them know that they are an important part of your family.
- Recognize academic achievements by telling them how proud you are of them.
- Share some of your own experiences and how you handled the situation to turn a challenging event into a learning experience.

## PROMOTE SELF-CONFIDENCE

- Teach them to question their "inner critic" that create limitations.
- Encourage them to do something that is out of their "comfort zone."
- Have them do one good thing each day that will help them to firmly believe in themselves.
- Teach them how to create steps for daily "wins."
- Make time to discuss one win they achieved during the course of their day or week and how it made them feel.
- Remember that some of the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors we observe at home and in school are the unfortunate result of loss or lack of self-confidence.

## RAISE THE BAR

- Tell your child you see the good in him or her.
- Let them know that you believe they have untapped potential, and why.
- Show that you see their value and potential, even when they have difficulty seeing it for themselves.
- Help them connect with their inner leader.
- Support their aspirations to achieve success.
- Remind them that they are fully capable of success.
- Support them on their journey even if they say they don't need you.

## MANTRAS

- Write a note of encouragement and put it in their book bag before school.
- Place a mantra on their bed for them to find when they get home from school.
- Put a "sticky note" with words of love and encouragement on their bathroom or bedroom mirror where they can see it every day.
- Gift them a t-shirt or pin that includes meaningful words of empowerment.

## BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

- Use positive reinforcement when they make good choices.
- Praise them for good behavior.
- Role play.
- Listen without judgement.
- Encourage them to express their feelings in an appropriate manner.

## KINDNESS

- Create a weekly Gratitude Event.
- Encourage them to share 1 thing they are thankful for.
- Ask them to share 1 act of kindness they saw this week.
- Share an act of kindness you have experienced.
- Have them share an act of kindness they did for someone else that week and ask them how they felt afterwards.

## TELL THEM THEY MATTER

- I love you.
- I see you.
- I hear you.
- I feel your pain.
- You are an amazing person.
- You have incredible potential.
- You can achieve anything you set your mind to.
- I see the hidden leader in you, waiting to be activated.

## FOSTER SELF-WORTH

- Help them create positive thoughts that infuse the belief that they are greater than their experiences.
- Tell them they are human beings of great value and of incomprehensible worth.
- Teach them how to replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts.
- Instill in them the belief that the power of positive thinking can help them create change in their lives.

## ADVOCATE

- Teach them how to take charge of their education.
- Support them on their journey by help them to fall in love with learning.
- Get them excited, motivated, and empowered to know more.
- Inspire them to overcome fears of not being smart enough by acknowledging that they're smart and capable.