

Special Foster Care & Therapeutic Respite Care

Tips, Tools & Resources

How to Encourage Shy Kids

Normalize shyness and depict it in a positive light. Compare shy children to other shy children who have grown up to be successful adults: “You’re just like Abraham Lincoln. Did you know that he was afraid of boys, too? or “I guess you’re going to be a great movie star like Tom Hanks. He used to be really shy!”

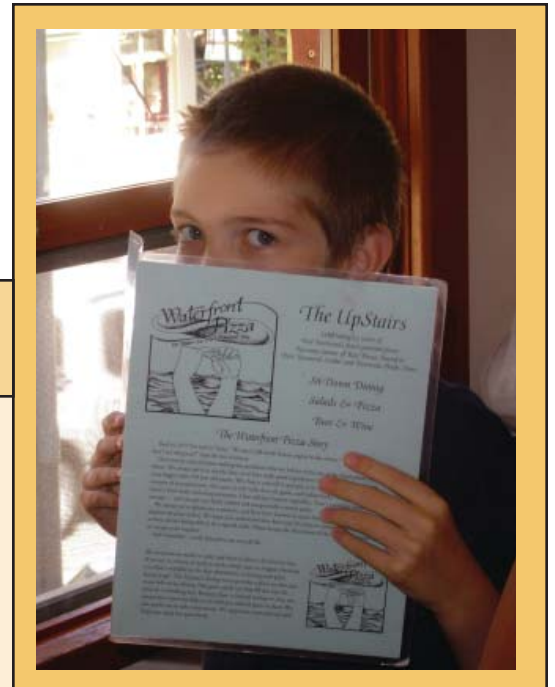
Make regular contact. It’s easy for shy children to fall through the cracks and the farther they fall, the harder it is for them to accept attention when it’s given. Making contact with shy children on a regular basis—daily, if possible—helps keep shy children connected. You don’t have to do much—a comment, question or smile can make a big difference. The key is to make contact in a way that doesn’t single shy children out as being different.

Give shy children a job to do. Much like shy adults, shy children do better when they have something to do that allows them to: a) feel like they’re making a contribution and b) have a reason to interact with others—in this case, their fellow students. These children often lack the confidence to get started or, in some cases, simply don’t know how to approach other children.

Comment on their successes and post their work. Most shy children crave attention, but dread it at the same time. They want to feel special, but have difficulty being in the limelight.

Help Children Learn To Initiate Contact With Others. Walking up to a stranger or even a friend can be difficult for an adult, but for a shy child, it’s nothing less than torture.

Reward Small Improvements. Most shy children blossom when challenges are broken into manageable chunks. It’s their anxiety not their intelligence that gets in the way of their learning.



Source: <http://www.shakeyourshyness.com/INDEX.HTMS>

Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent Training Exercise

Give an example of how a shy child might act, providing specific behavioral details.

Describe three different approaches you might take to help that child overcome his/her shyness.

Who else in the child's life might be able to reinforce your efforts and how might you encourage that person to participate in your plan?