Help your child conquer self-consciousness

Self-consciousness can make school concerts and end of year events daunting for some students. Here are some ideas to help.

1. **Help them prepare for public performance**
   They can practise a talk or even rehearse an opening line to help them break the ice in social situations. Practice leads to competence, which often alleviates self-consciousness.

2. **Use baby steps in social situations**
   If they feel uncomfortable meeting a whole bunch of new people, then they can just meet one new friend at a party, rather than try to meet too many people, which can be overwhelming.

3. **Practise strong self-talk**
   Self-conscious kids often have atrocious self-talk. They say everyone is watching them enter a room, when the reality is quite different. Help them develop some realistic and more assertive messages about themselves. "It will be fun going on stage at the concert with my friends" is far more helpful than "Everyone will be staring at me" or "What if I muck up?".

4. **Catch kids being brave**
   What you focus on expands so make sure you highlight kids being brave and overcoming possibly embarrassing situations. Also, let them know that even though they may have stumbled or fluffed a line or two the room didn't cave in. It wasn't so bad.

5. **Breathe in, breathe out**
   Some children and young people can be so debilitated by their self-consciousness that they work themselves into a frenzy with worry. Deep breathing where they count to 3 breathing in, but count to 6 when breathing out will help kids regain calm, control and hopefully perspective.

Self-consciousness is something that many adults suffer from too, so these ideas may hold true for you. It may not be something we can completely eradicate but it is something we all can learn to control so it doesn't stop us, or our kids, doing what we want to do.

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