

Helping kids become resilient

Definition: 'Resilience – the ability to cope in times of stress or hardship.'

As parents we work to equip our children with the tools they need to solve their own problems, to respond to difficulties, to feel good about themselves and others, and to perceive the future in a hopeful and confident manner.

It would be great if all children arrived with a *Do it Yourself Manual* but here are some ideas to help your child become resilient.

Brooks and Goldstein talk of 10 key principles for resilience:

- Be empathetic – teach understanding of how another person might feel, recognize your own feelings
- Communicate and listen effectively – and respond to what your child is saying
- Love your children in ways that make them feel special and appreciated – let them know you love them unconditionally.
- Accept your child for who they are and help them to set reasonable goals – goals for today, and goals for the future. It's good to work towards something.
- Help them experience success in what ever they show competence in (even if it's collecting bugs)
- Focus on positives, reword negative talk – sometimes the positive may be hard to see, but it's there. Always end a conversation with something positive. Instead of saying 'don't do ,,,,,,' - say what you want your child to do.
- Help them to understand that 'mistakes' are just things yet to be learnt
- Develop responsibility, compassion and social awareness by providing opportunities where you child can contribute or give back to others.
- Teach your child to solve their own problems and make appropriate decisions (What's the problem? What are the choices? Which is the best choice? Try it. If it doesn't work review your choices.) This also helps them to take responsibility for their actions.
- Discipline in a way that promotes self- discipline and self worth. Punishment is one form of discipline and often a least effective form as it teaches the child what not to do rather than what to do, and can often build resentment. It is difficult to teach your child a better way to behave when you yourself are angry and upset. So be calm, tell your child what you want them to do, and praise your child for doing the right thing. Have though, a plan in place for dealing with noncompliance, but STAY CALM. Your child is watching you and will copy how you behave.

In following these principle we will contribute to helping our children be resilient, to be emotionally healthy, and equipped to successfully confront challenges, and bounce back from setbacks.

Adapted from 'Raising Resilient Children' by R.Brooks and S. Goldstein