

Resilience

What is resilience?

Resilience refers to our ability to successfully adapt and change to stressful events in healthy and constructive ways – it's how we 'bounce back' after life throws us a road block. Resilience helps us to understand that we can recover and move on when negative or disappointing events occur in our lives.

How can we teach and build resilience?

1. Make sure your child has a place he or she feels safe, whether that is home or school (ideally, both would feel safe).
2. Talk to your children. When they have questions, answer them honestly but simply and with reassurance that includes black-and-white statements that leave no room for doubt, such as "I will always take care of you." Don't discount their fears when they bring them to you.
3. Realize that extra stresses may heighten normal daily stresses. Your children might normally be able to handle a failed test or teasing, but be understanding that they may respond with anger or bad behavior to stress that normally wouldn't rattle them. Reassure them that you just expect them to do their best.
4. Teach empathy. Talk to your child about their feelings and other people's feelings. Talk to your child about how to be a friend and how a friend acts.
5. Teach self care. Parents know how to make sure their child is eating, exercising and resting properly, but self care can also involve talking to your child about the importance of down time or fun time.
6. Encourage a positive self view. Talk to your child about ways they have handled hard or changing situations in the past, and how handling this now will help in the future. Sometimes children need reassurance from adults that they are able to solve problems and handle certain situations.
7. Discuss perspective and hope for the future – even in difficult situations it can help to talk to a child about the broader context of these events. Some children may be too young to understand a long term look, but it can help to talk to a child about the fact that these situations are not forever, and that the future is still bright.

For more information about resilience, and tips on how to discuss with children you can speak to your child's teacher, the school counsellor or have a look at online resources such as:

<https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/KidsMatter-and-resilience>