

Hand-out for Parents

RAISING RESILIENT KIDS



RESILIENT CHILDREN are able to bounce back from adversity and cope with the challenges and stresses of daily life. This resilience comes from a combination of positive attributes, abilities and thinking skills that help people recover from negative experiences, reach out to others, understand their own strengths and weakness and look after themselves.

How parents can help

Resiliency comes from four main areas: supportive relationships, emotional awareness/skills, competence, and realistic optimism. Here are some quick tips for building those strengths in children.

Supportive relationships

- Be ready to listen when children are ready to talk.
- If you lead a busy life, be aware of little opportunities to connect – during meals and car rides, watching TV or doing chores together.
- Eat at least one (device-free) meal together.
- Schedule special time with individual children to do something that you enjoy together.
- Comment on your child's positive qualities.
- Show some interest in your child's interests.

Emotional skills

- Respect children's emotions. Allow them to express their feelings and try not to make children "feel bad for feeling bad."

- Show sympathy for children's feelings and comfort children when they are distressed.
- Share positive emotions with your children.
- Teach children the language of emotion. Use words to describe their feelings and your own feelings.
- Help children understand their own feelings and the feelings of others.
- Manage your own emotions as well as you can. Your modeling is the most powerful teacher.

Competence

- Give children time for unstructured play, which teaches them decision-making, problem-solving, and self-confidence.
- Encourage and support children's interests; these interests help kids develop skills and knowledge that contribute to their sense of themselves as skilled, competent people.
- Use positive discipline that helps children understand the impact of their actions.
- Let children help you with household tasks that involve life skills: cooking, simple repairs, painting, window washing etc.

Optimistic thinking

- Gently challenge children's negative thoughts.
- Show children alternative, more positive (but still realistic) ways of looking at negative situations.
- Model realistic optimism and positive thinking in your own behaviour.
- Encourage respectful assertiveness and negotiation.

For more information, check out our Parenting for Life booklet: [*Kids Can Cope: Parenting Resilient Children at Home and at School.*](#)

