

Building Resiliency Skills

While it's not possible to protect our children from the ups and downs of life, we can provide them with opportunities to build resiliency and successfully navigate through childhood and adolescence.

Research tells us that it's not rugged self-reliance, determination, or inner strength that leads kids through adversity but the reliable presence of at least one supportive relationship. Let's take a look at some of the ways that families can help kids develop resilience:

- Feeling confident and developing mastery over a set of skills
 - Let your kids play the same game over and over again or practice the same song on the piano. This helps develop the feeling of mastery and builds confidence.
- Teach them how to “reframe” a disappointing moment or experience. The goal is to acknowledge the disappointing thing and then turn it into something positive.
 - Example-Your child's baseball game gets canceled. You can say - “I know you were excited to play and it's disappointing that it was canceled because of the rain. Why don't we think of a different activity to do instead”?
- Encourage a growth mindset
 - Children can become easily discouraged when something does not immediately go their way or they do not immediately excel at an activity.
 - There is power in the word “yet”. When your child becomes discouraged that they “aren't good at something and never will be” you can say “You aren't good at algebra, yet. With more practice, you will get better”.
- Play a board game: Board games are good for impulse control because they teach the skill of turn-taking. Board games also require the use of executive functioning skills: planning, working memory, and mental flexibility (shifting thoughts to a better solution)
- Allow your kids to express all emotions so that they feel comfortable asking for help in difficult times.
- Encourage children to connect and share time with other people (friends, family members, neighbors). This encourages them to understand other people's thoughts, feelings, and perspectives.
- Foster healthy relationships that reinforce positive messages.
- Establish routines. Children thrive with predictability and routines provide predictability.
- Help your child establish reasonable and obtainable goals. Setting small goals helps to reduce stress, and when the goals are met provides kids with a sense of accomplishment.
- Allow your child to take a break. Schoolwork can be stressful and taking a break encourages kids to practice good mental health.
- Embed choices into your child's day-to-day activities. This allows children to have a feeling of control and develops self-efficacy.