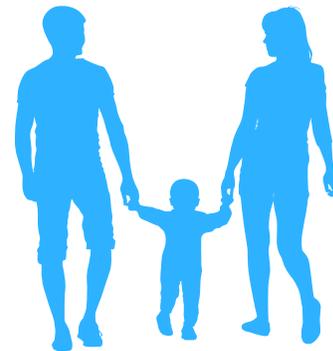


# Fast Facts: Resilience

We tend to idealize childhood as a carefree time, but youth alone offers no shield against the emotional hurts and traumas many children face. Children can be asked to deal with problems ranging from adapting to a new classroom to bullying by classmates or even abuse at home. Add to that the uncertainties that are part of growing up, and childhood can be anything but carefree. **The ability to thrive despite these challenges arises from the skills of resilience.**

Building resilience — the ability to adapt well to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress — can help our children manage stress and feelings of anxiety and uncertainty.

"The single most common factor for children who develop resilience is at least **one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult**"



**These positive influences optimize resilience across multiple contexts:**

1. Supportive adult-child relationships;
2. A growing sense of self-efficacy and perceived control;
3. Opportunities to strengthen adaptive skills and self-regulatory capacities; and
4. Sources of faith, hope, and cultural traditions.

**The good news? The capabilities that underlie resilience can be strengthened at any age.**

# What can I do?

## **Make connections**

Teach your child how to make friends, including the skill of empathy, or feeling another's pain. Encourage your child to be a friend in order to get friends. Build a strong family network to support your child through his or her inevitable disappointments and hurts. At school, watch to make sure that one child is not being isolated.

## **Help your child by having him or her help others**

Children who may feel helpless can be empowered by helping others. Engage your child in age-appropriate volunteer work, or ask for assistance yourself with some task that he or she can master.

## **Maintain a daily routine**

Sticking to a routine can be comforting to children, especially younger children who crave structure in their lives. Encourage your child to develop his or her own routines.

## **Take a break**

Teach your child how to focus on something besides what's worrying him. Be aware of what your child is exposed to that can be troubling, whether it be news, the Internet or overheard conversations, and make sure your child takes a break from those things if they trouble her.

## **Teach your child self-care**

Make yourself a good example, and teach your child the importance of making time to eat properly, exercise and rest. Make sure your child has time to have fun, and make sure that your child hasn't scheduled every moment of his or her life with no "down time" to relax. Caring for oneself and even having fun will help your child stay balanced and better deal with stressful times.

## **Move toward your goals**

Teach your child to set reasonable goals and then to move toward them one step at a time. Moving toward that goal — even if it's a tiny step — and receiving praise for doing so will focus your child on what he or she has accomplished rather than on what hasn't been accomplished, and can help build the resilience to move forward in the face of challenges.

## **Nurture a positive self-view**

Help your child remember ways that he or she has successfully handled hardships in the past and then help him understand that these past challenges help him build the strength to handle future challenges.

# What can I do?

## **Keep things in perspective and maintain a hopeful outlook**

Even when your child is facing very painful events, help him look at the situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Although your child may be too young to consider a long-term look on his own, help him or her see that there is a future beyond the current situation and that the future can be good.

## **Look for opportunities for self-discovery**

Tough times are often the times when children learn the most about themselves. Help your child take a look at how whatever he is facing can teach him "what he is made of." At school, consider leading discussions of what each student has learned after facing down a tough situation.

## **Accept that change is part of living**

Change often can be scary for children and teens. Help your child see that change is part of life and new goals can replace goals that have become unattainable. In school, point out how students have changed as they moved up in grade levels and discuss how that change has had an impact on the students.

# Additional Resources: Resilience



<https://childmind.org/topics/concerns/stress-and-resilience/>

**Article:** Helping children cope with frightening news

**Article:** How to help kids learn to fail

**Article:** What's wrong with helicopter parenting?

**Article:** 12 Tips for Raising Confident Kids

**Article:** How to Help Kids Deal with Rejection

**Article:** The Power of Mindfulness

**Article:** Helping Children Deal with Grief

**Article:** How to Foster Resilience in Kids

**Article:** What Makes an Event Traumatic for a Child?

## Recommended Books:

Building Resilience in Children and Teens: Giving Kids Roots and Wings, Kenneth R. Ginsburg, M.D.

Raising a Self-Disciplined Child: Help Your Child Become More Responsible, Confident, and Resilient  
Robert Brooks, Ph.D. and Sam Goldstein

Raising Kids to Thrive: Balancing Love with Expectations and Protection with Trust, Kenneth R. Ginsburg, M.D.

Raising Resilient Children: Fostering Strength, Hope, and Optimism in Your Child, Robert Brooks, Ph.D. and Sam Goldstein

Reaching Teens: Strength-Based Communication Strategies to Build Resilience and Support Healthy Adolescent Development, Kenneth R. Ginsburg, M.D. and Sara B Kinsman, M.D. Ph.D.

Teen Resiliency-Building Workbook, John J Liptak, Ed.D.

The Power of Resilience: Achieving Balance, Confidence, and Personal Strength in Your Life, Robert Brooks, Ph.D. and Sam Goldstein

The Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens: Mindfulness Skills to Help You Deal with Stress, Gina Biegel