

Resilience refers to our ability to withstand, recover and adjust after something difficult or traumatic has happened. It is not something you either have or don't have, but can be seen as a set of skills that can be strengthened- a bit like a muscle. Being resilient is not about just 'getting on with it' and staying positive all the time. It comes from being in touch with life's challenges and finding sources of strength, both from within and around us. The following are our tips to help support children and young people to build their resilience.



Being a Supportive Caregiver

Research has shown that this is the single most important factor in helping children develop resilience. Supportive relationships help children develop skills like being able to plan and regulate their behaviour and emotions, as well as giving children a sense of self-efficacy.



Social Support

This can help children feel positive about themselves and increase their self-esteem, optimism and resilience. It can be helpful for adults to draw a child's attention to the friends and relatives in their 'fan club' and support children to strengthen these relationships.



Ensure children understand that they are not alone

- Give children the message that being brave can mean asking for help. While it is important that children are encouraged to develop skills and independence, give children the message that they don't have to deal with difficulties alone.
- Remind them of the times they have succeeded and draw their attention to the courageous things they do. Let them know you believe in their ability to overcome challenges.



Develop Executive Function

This relates to the skills we need to manage our feelings and behaviour and develop coping strategies. Ways to build a child's executive functioning include establishing routines, modelling healthy behaviour, creative play and board games/games involving memory.



Mindfulness Exercise

Mindfulness can help children to notice tricky thoughts and feelings without getting swept up in them. Support children to tune in to their senses as a way to ground them in the present moment and encourage them to notice their thoughts and feelings without judgement.



Exercise

Exercise increases neurochemicals that calm the brain in times of stress. Focus on activities the child enjoys and be playful – hula hooping and dancing can work just as well as a game of football.



Don't forget about yourself

One of the most helpful things an adult can do is to practice what you preach and be a role model to the children you are supporting. When we take good care of ourselves our hearts can be more open and we are less likely to feel critical and frustrated.

Content adapted from the Centre for the Developing Child, Harvard University
<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/resilience/> and Hey Sigmund
<https://www.heyigmund.com/building-resilience-children/>

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