

Building Resilient Kids

Resilience is the ability to cope with stressors & challenges in a healthy and productive way. Resilient children aren't necessarily less stressed than other children, but they are better equipped to manage the stressors they face on a daily basis.

There is no one way to be resilient; it looks different for every single person. Resilience is not a skill to be learned, but rather what happens when we learn many different skills. By guiding our children in the following categories, we can help them successfully navigate future adversity in a way that is both positive & healthy.

Help them
develop
supportive
relationships

Teach them
how to
manage their
emotions

Practice
Mindfulness
together

Teach
them to
problem
solve

Make sure
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how to ask
for help

Exercise!

Help them
re-frame
negative
thinking

Let them
take risks

Don't bail
them out

Help them feel
competent &
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Nurture a
growth
mindset

Be a good
role model

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Help them develop supportive relationships: Children need at least one stable, committed relationship with a supportive adult. These relationships help a child feel loved & valued. Without these relationships, the brain senses threat, and the stress response will remain activated. Model & encourage supportive, healthy friendships with peers, too.

Teach them how to manage their emotions: Help children label their feelings so they can find the correct language to express how they feel. Validate their feelings, and teach them appropriate ways to express how they feel. Give them strategies to cope with overwhelming or strong emotions.

Practice Mindfulness together: Mindfulness causes changes to occur that strengthen the "thinking" part of our brain (Prefrontal Cortex). While it's doing this, it's also reducing the activity in the "alert center" (amygdala) of the brain. This allows the prefrontal cortex to regain control, calming the emotional brain. When the emotional brain is calm, so is your child.

Teach them to problem solve: Encourage them to think of all the possible solutions to a problem and then have them weigh out the pros & cons. Don't jump in with the answer - let them figure it out themselves. Encourage & nurture their creativity during this process, as well.

Make sure they know how to ask for help: We don't need to cope alone, and neither do children. Help them understand that asking for help is sometimes the best strategy. Knowing when something is beyond your scope, and knowing who and how to ask for help is extremely important in managing stress.

Exercise: Exercise helps by releasing endorphins into our brains, giving off a calming effect. Go hiking or play tennis. Ride a bike or walk the dog. Just get moving.

Help them re-frame negative thinking: When we are stressed, we get stuck in negative thought patterns. Teach them to identify negative thinking and re-frame it so that it is more realistic. This will in turn help the situation seem less threatening.

Let them take risks: Age-appropriate risks are important. They help children learn their limits, and help them develop their decision making skills.

Don't bail them out: At least not every time! If you know they can manage, resist the urge to help them. When children face small challenges early on in their lives, they learn skills to manage the bigger challenges that come later on in life.

Help them feel competent and capable: When children feel confident & capable, they believe in their ability to do hard things and conquer challenges. Give them responsibilities. Trust them with tasks. Let them know that you believe in them and their ability to succeed.

Nurture a growth mindset: Children with a growth mindset believe they can improve their skills through practice and hard work. If you believe that you can improve, you will keep trying new strategies until something solves the problem.

Be a good role model: Children look to adults in their lives for information on how to respond to the world. Use helpful coping strategies. Seek help when you need to. Demonstrate effective problem solving, and express emotions in a healthy way. Show the children in your life what resiliency looks like.

*For more information, visit [Mindfullittleminds.com](https://www.mindfullittleminds.com)