



## Raising a Resilient Child

**R**esiliency is a character trait that best describes how one copes with adversity, intense or persistent stress, tragedy or the unexpected. Resilient children are those who maintain their composure and sense of well-being despite adverse circumstances.

Common stresses, such as failing grades, humiliation at the hand of a peer, or a break-up with a boyfriend, will trigger negative feelings in a young person. Nonresilient kids often internalize these events and overreact by saying, “I’m stupid,” or “nobody likes me.”

Highly resilient children, on the other hand, often feel hurt, but the wound is not able to penetrate their self-esteem. They seem to have confidence that things will work out.

### Family functioning

Children need to know that they can trust their parents to protect them from danger and talk with them when they are troubled. Children who have this foundation of trust have been shown to be more confident and resilient than children who are not secure in their families.

### Helpful tips

Here are some things that parents can do to foster resiliency in their children:

- **Observe how your child handles stressful situations.** If he/she responds with fear, assure him/her that you are there to help, encourage and protect him/her.
- **Set a good example.** Demonstrate self-control and coping skills.
- **Don’t overload your child** with too many after-school activities and responsibilities.
- **Role-play a stressful situation with your child.** Help him/her figure out a constructive way to solve a problem.
- **Teach your child to transfer coping strategies** from one area of life to other situations.
- **Use humor to buffer bad feelings and situations.** A child who learns to use humor will be better able to keep things in perspective.
- **When you are under extra stress, check to be sure that you are not passing it along to your child.**

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