



Helping Young Children Cope with Stress: Developing Resiliency

What is resiliency?

Resiliency is the ability to cope with stressful situations, changes, or problems. Resilient children use coping skills that they developed from past experiences to cope better with new situations as they arise. They are better able to adapt to new situations and learn new coping skills that they can use in the future.

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Why is resilience important?

Life is not stress free. All people experience stress, change, and problems in their lives. Caregivers can help children learn skills to deal with stress. These skills can be taught at a very young age.

Young children will continue to develop these skills throughout their lives.

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How can I help my young children develop resiliency?

Things I can do as a parent ...

- Love my children no matter what they say or how they behave (unconditional love)
- Tell my child that I love him often
- Show my child that I love her (e.g., hug or cuddle, and provide special time just for her)
- Provide a safe and consistent home environment
- Show my child that I am confident, flexible, courageous, and optimistic
- Praise my child; be specific about what I am praising and why
- Acknowledge and label my child's feelings
- Encourage safe exploration and independence
- Reinforce rules in a calm and kind way
- Give my child comfort and encouragement in stressful situations
- Use holding, rocking, and a soothing voice to calm my child
- Allow my child to develop close and safe relationships with other adults and children

Things I can teach my child ...

- Encourage my child to express feelings
- Help my child recognize other people's feelings
- Help my child accept responsibility for his or her own behaviour
- Teach my child strategies to make herself feel better in difficult situations
- Encourage my child to use problem-solving skills and decision making skills