

## Resilience in Difficult Circumstances

Do you wonder if your child has the resilience to cope in times of inevitable difficult circumstances?

Resilience is the ability to bounce back and adapt to adverse situations including stress, tragedy, threats, setbacks (sometimes these seem minor to adults but seem major to children) and trauma; it's the ability to manage life and adapt to change and stressful events in healthy and constructive ways. Resilience is one of the main defences we have against being dragged down by life's circumstances so is a vital ability to develop.

Learning to think positively and in perspective means a child can not only cope with problems and setbacks but it also means they will have opportunities to learn how to build strengths that promote wellbeing.

As parents we want our kids to cope with whatever they face; to find a way to overcome difficulties and thrive. To build resilience, children ideally require:

- family who model resilience themselves and who acknowledge that change is part of life. Parents who maintain a realistic perspective on situations and not rush to solve a child's problem if they are able to solve it themselves, encourage their child to be a problem solver and to be resilient
- strong relationships with family and friends where children feel unconditionally loved, safe, valued and listened to
- the development of an emotional vocabulary to label feelings so they can describe their feelings and those of others
- a sense of personal competence - feelings of independence and an accurate understanding of personal strengths and limitations
- an ability to organise themselves and set goals
- an understanding that failure is simply an opportunity to give it another go, perhaps with an alternative approach!
- a relationship with at least one caring adult other than family
- a safe and stable environment where family and school work together creating a sense of belonging
- an ability to find the positive aspects in a negative situation
- an ability to use positive self talk especially when coping with a difficult situation, as what you say to yourself influences how you feel and how you feel influences your behaviour.

In an article last term we wrote about raising independent and self motivated children and largely the theme of giving children responsibility for resolving their own problems rather than stepping in quickly applies here and this helps them to develop resilience. Sometimes our protective, nurturing natures take over when the best lessons are those learned through first hand experiences.

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