



# A WAY OF BEING WITH CHILDREN

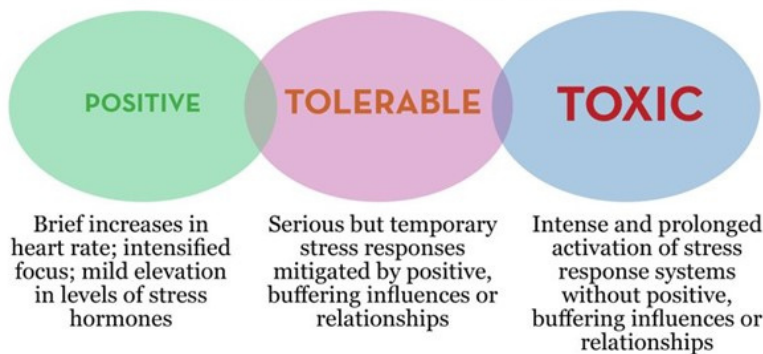
## Promoting Resilience

### Tips to Promote Child Well-Being and Resilience

Resilience describes human beings' ability to adapt well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant stress. Resilience helps us “bounce back” from the setbacks and disappointments of life. Since life is undoubtedly full of challenges and hardship, teaching children resilience skills is vital to their healthy development and ability to thrive.

We all experience stress in our lives; it's part of being a human being. The way we respond to stress, however, differs from person to person. Resilience is the antidote to stressful situations -- the knowledge that circumstances can and will get better. Resilience may have a genetic component but it can also be practiced and developed. Resilience is a skill you can build.

### DEGREES OF STRESS



### Signs of Trauma from Toxic Stress

- Depression & anxiety
- Behavioral changes,
- Difficulties with self-regulation
- Anger and irritability
- Problems relating to others
- Issues forming attachments
- Withdrawal and/or regression
- Attention and academic difficulties
- Nightmares, difficulty sleeping/eating
- Physical symptoms like stomach aches

### Protective Factors to Build Resilience

Resilience is like a see-saw, with stresses and trauma on one side and protective factors on the other. When the good outweighs the bad, children tend to do well.

Children need:

- At least one stable, loving relationship with an adult
- Positive early intervention during stressful times -- the sooner the better!
- Scaffolding or a support system that surrounds and buffers them against adversity.

### The Importance of Resilience

- Creates a buffer from the impact of trauma
- Maintains balance in our lives
- Improves learning ability
- Better academic achievement
- Reduces risk-taking behaviors
- Promotes mental health
- Supports personal growth
- Increases physical health
- Lowers the rate of mortality



### NOTE

As an adult, your ability to help children build resilience is based on your own coping skills.

Parents, caregivers, and teachers need to regularly check-in on their own resilience and stress levels.



# 10 Ways to Help Build Resilience



## **Let children know you love them unconditionally.**

Children need to feel loved and accepted for who they are, regardless of any struggles they may be facing. This provides a solid foundation when the world feels wobbly.

## **Practice open communication with your children.**

Keep the lines of communication open to strengthen your relationships. Ask open-ended questions (ones that require more than 'yes' or 'no' answers) in order to draw out your children's true feelings on different subjects.

## **Allow children to learn and fail.**

As adults, we sometimes try to jump in to prevent our children from failing. It is difficult to watch them struggle, but children need to take risks and push themselves outside their comfort zone to build resilience.

## **Let them know that it's okay to ask for help.**

Children will often have the idea that being brave is about dealing with things by themselves. Let them know that being brave really means knowing when to ask for help. They will learn to seek help when they feel overwhelmed.

## **Teach problem-solving; don't just give answers.**

Rather than providing your child with the answer to every question, it's more beneficial to let them reason it out with you. You can ask skillful questions to lead them along the right path, but the lesson is better learned when they reach the conclusion on their own.

## **Nurture a positive self-view.**

Help your child remember ways they have successfully handled hardships in the past and help them understand that these past challenges help build the strength to handle future challenges.

## **Help children identify their emotions.**

Children who are "acting out" are often behaving that way because they lack the ability to describe their feelings. You can work with your child to identify the emotions they're experiencing and help them reason out why they are experiencing them.

## **Acknowledge your own mistakes.**

You can share your mistakes with your children and let them know why you made the mistake and how you will do things differently next time. We all fail; we all need to keep trying.

## **Teach goal-setting and the inevitability of setbacks.**

Teach your child to set reasonable goals and help them to move toward them one step at a time. This can help build the resilience to move forward in the face of challenges.

## **Teach and model self-care and coping skills.**

Teach your child the importance of basic self-care. This may include making more time to eat properly, exercise, and get sufficient sleep. Children learn through imitation and they look to the adults in their lives to learn how to respond and behave.



Get more resources at: [www.centerforchildcounseling.org/awayofbeing](http://www.centerforchildcounseling.org/awayofbeing)