

Building resilience

Giving your child tools for a healthy life

What is resilience?

- Resilience is the ability to adapt easily to change and recover or 'bounce back' from challenges.
- All children are capable of being resilient.
- Some children seem to be naturally resilient. About 40% of children have a positive mood and adapt well to change.
- Children can become more resilient, with teaching and support from their parents, families and caregivers.

How can I help my child become more resilient?

Help your child deal with emotions

- Help your child identify and name their feelings (happy, sad, angry, nervous...). Explain that everyone has these feelings.
- Show empathy. Let them know you understand and respect their feelings.
- Comfort them to show that you care.
- Encourage them to express their feelings in an appropriate way.
- Teach them how to calm themselves. For example, find ways to relax such as reading, taking a bath, cuddling with a stuffed toy or listening to music.
- Help them replace unhelpful coping with helpful coping.

Change unhelpful coping	➔	To helpful coping
Pretending everything is ok	➔	Asking for a hug
Keeping feelings bottled up	➔	Sharing feelings with a trusted person

Give your child opportunities for learning

- Plan ‘free’ or unstructured time for them to play, make choices, use their imagination and be creative. Children learn through everyday activities, as well as at school.
- Let them experience new places and things. Children are naturally curious.

Teach your child helpful ways of thinking

- Encourage helpful self-talk, a positive ‘inner voice’.
- Help them not listen to or change unhelpful self-talk, which is harsh or negative. For example:

Change unhelpful self-talk	➔	To helpful self-talk
It has to be perfect	➔	My best is good enough
I can't do this	➔	I just have to try

Teach your child basic social skills

- Teach them how to greet others, start and maintain conversations, use manners and take turns. These skills help your child make friends.
- Arrange ‘playdates’ or time for friends to visit.
- Talk about what to do when things don’t go as expected.
- Give positive attention (such as praise) to behaviour you want to see. Pay no attention to behaviours you don’t want to see such as interrupting.

Help your child have a healthy body

- Plan some exercise or physical activity every day.
- Offer them a variety of healthy foods each day.
- Teach them how to care for their mouth, teeth and skin. Set a daily routine for personal care.
- Set a bedtime routine. Help them get enough sleep for their age.

Visit Canada.ca for more information:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeping your child healthy• Physical activity tips for children• Healthy eating for children