

THE Moodsters™

Guidelines for Grown-ups

How to Help Your Child Develop Resilience in a Topsy-Turvy World

We've been through a lot these last several years, haven't we? No one ever said that parenting was going to be easy, but how could we have anticipated the challenges and the life-altering changes that parents face in today's topsy-turvy world? Now, more than ever, young children and their families need help identifying their own strengths and the sources of support that will enable them to not just "bounce back," but to bounce *forward* in the face of adversity. That is **resilience**.

Resilience is the ability to adapt well to life and its challenges. It's a state of physical, mental, spiritual, and social well-being that helps kids stay calm, learn from their mistakes, and remain optimistic. Resilient children are curious, courageous, and trust their own instincts.

This does not mean that resilient children never experience difficulty or stress—but research shows that children who are resilient experience *less* stress and are better equipped to deal with setbacks. For parents, helping your child develop resilience means strengthening them from the inside out.

This is where the Moodsters come in. The science-based Moodsters were created as tangible, child-friendly tools that promote optimal health and give children the emotional building blocks they need in order to thrive in a complex world.

Can anyone become resilient? The answer is Yes! And the additional good news is that resilience grows over a lifetime, so it's never too late for you *and* your child to become resilient. You can best help your child when you help yourself. So, let's get started!

Resilience Tips for Grown-ups

The keys to developing resilience—your own and your child’s—are to CARE for yourself; CONNECT with kids, family, and friends; COMMUNICATE with your child; and foster CREATIVE thinking. Here’s how:

CARE

- Eat healthy foods and get plenty of rest.
- Be kind and compassionate with yourself!
- Exercise—it’s the number one stress buster.
- Try mindful meditation, deep breathing, stretching, or yoga.
- Consider journaling as a way to express your own emotions.
- Carve out some time for yourself every single day.
- Find a hobby that you enjoy.
- Stick to daily routines: Structure helps during challenging times.

CONNECT

- Parenting isn’t easy! It’s important to connect with other parents, friends, or your faith community.
- Ask for help if you’re feeling overwhelmed. Getting support for yourself will help you support your child.
- Look for examples of famous people who overcame challenges.
- With your children, stay connected with friends and family—in person or by phone, video chats, or texts.
- Spend time with your children, be available for their conversations. Stay engaged. Play!
- Reassure them that they are loved and cared for.

COMMUNICATE

- It all begins with talking. Ask children how they are feeling. Listen to them. Validate their feelings.
- It's okay to share your feelings, too. Explain to your child what makes you feel that way, and how you handle those feelings.
- Rather than solving your child's problems for them, help your child problem-solve by exploring different solutions and deciding on the best one.
- As much as possible, keep a positive outlook to enable children to see the positive things in life.
- Let your child know that you make mistakes too! Then talk about how you learn from them.
- Share a story of a hard time you went through and how you bounced forward.
- The beloved Mr. Rogers used to say, "What's mentionable is manageable." When stressful things are happening in the world you don't need to hide it. Giving children age-appropriate information can reduce their stress.
- Acknowledge your child's accomplishments!

BE CREATIVE

- Build creativity into your child's day: drawing, writing stories, music, dance, imaginative play.
- Help your child set reasonable goals and move towards them one step at a time.
- Use play as an outlet to help children express their feelings.
- Consider volunteering with your child. Helping others makes you feel good, too.

Resilience Messages for Children

Here are some ways to discuss and foster resilience, using child-friendly terms.

- “Resilience is a BIG word that means you keep trying, even if you make a mistake or if things don’t go your way.”
- “Staying healthy and taking care of your body and brain helps you be resilient. And that’s so important because there’s only one you!”
- “When things don’t work out and you try again, you’re getting smarter and stronger and braver.”
- “All feelings are normal. It’s what you do with them that counts!”
- “Spending time with the people you love and who love you right back also helps make you resilient—because you know they’ll always be right there to support you!”
- “Tell a story about a change you’re going through, or a hard time you’re having.”
- “One way to deal with change is to ask questions. The answers can help you understand what’s going on, so you feel less scared, or sad or mad.”
- “Ask for help if you need it—that’s always okay!”
- “Let’s make a list of things you like about yourself.”
- “It’s good to have a goal—that means something you want to do in the future. To reach your goal, you take smaller steps, one at a time, to get there.”
- “Problems are only a small part of our lives. When trouble comes, stay calm and tell yourself ‘I can do this!’”
- “When you are thankful for your family and friends, or for the food you have, and the toys you play with, that is GRATITUDE. Showing others gratitude is a good way to live because it makes everyone feel good!”
- “Try to relax each day: Sit comfortably, take some slow deep breaths, close your eyes, and picture yourself in your favorite peaceful and beautiful place.”
- “You’re a superstar at doing hard things! Pat yourself on the back for a job well done!”