



WHAT IS RESILIENCY?

Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from frustrations and to recover from setbacks. Resilient individuals adapt to change, stress or problems and are able to take things in stride. The result of this bouncing back is a feeling of success and confidence.

WHAT TRAITS DOES A RESILIENT CHILD POSSESS?

According to the study *Fostering Resiliency in Kids* by Bonnie Bernard (1991), resilient children have the following attributes in common:

- **Social Competence** – Resilient children respond to others and elicit responses from others easily. They are active, both physically and socially, show signs of being flexible (even in infancy) and adapt well to change. Quite often, resilient children have a great sense of humor and can laugh at life's situations and themselves.
- **Problem-Solving Skills** – Resilient children are able to think through challenging situations and follow through on finding a solution.
- **Autonomy** – Resilient children know who they are, know they can act independently and feel a sense of control over their situations/environments.
- **Sense of Purpose and Future** – Resilient children have the ability to plan and set goals. They are typically optimistic in the way they view the world.

CAN RESILIENCY BE LEARNED?

As a parent or caregiver, you *can* teach resiliency skills to children. Continued practice will improve a child's ability to recognize and use these skills independently. Experts say that children learn resiliency best when they are in an environment that...

1. Offers caring and support.
2. Holds high expectations for behavior, attitude and work ethic.
3. Encourages active, meaningful participation in family, school and community activities.

According to Darryl Connor in *Managing at the Speed of Change*, adults can model resiliency strategies for children by being positive, focused, flexible, organized and proactive.

HOW DOES RESILIENCY AFFECT ACADEMICS?

In 2004, three researchers from WestEd – Thomas L. Hanson, Gregory Austin and June Lee-Bayha – studied the relationship between resiliency and academic progress. Students in schools that offered the three environmental influences noted above showed significant strides in academic performance. These findings were true even for students in high-risk schools – as long as the schools provided “caring relationships, high expectation messages, and opportunities for meaningful participation and contribution.”

RESOURCES

Lessons for Living
Resiliency in Action
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