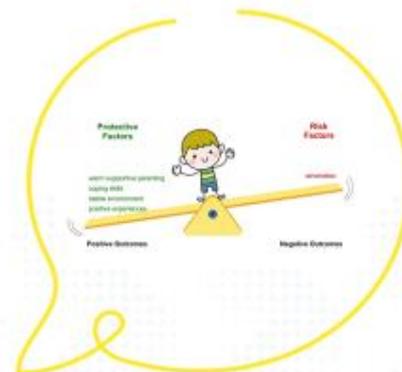




What is Resilience?

Resilience is the ability to 'bounce back' or cope with difficult times and is a result of various genetic or environmental factors combined.

Research tells us that a persons resilience to stress or problems can be improved through supportive attachments, use of coping strategies and positive experiences.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1r8hj72bfGo>



How does a child's resilience effect their friendships..



- From an early age children begin to form social connections and friendships. Alongside this, they will experience a variety of challenges such as cliques, friendship groups, unwritten rules and expectations about who-can-say-what-to-whom.

- Therefore, resilience to overcome these social challenges can be instrumental in maintaining those friendships and forming others in future.

Supporting resilience in friendship issues..

- **Listen:** This means, undivided attention given to your child without a response. Give visual cues that you are listening, such as nodding your head or looking confused. Use verbal phrases such as, "hmmm..." or "I see..." or "Wow!"
- **Ask questions:** These questions are open-ended, exploratory questions that will help you learn more about the situation. "How did you feel when she said that?" or "What happened next?" or "What were you hoping would happen?"
- **Empathize:** Find an emotion or a way to let your child know that you are listening. "That must have been very upsetting for you" or "what did you do to help you feel happy afterwards?"
- **Ask how you can help:** Rather than jumping in with a suggestion or picking up the phone to "fix it," ask your child what they need from you. For example, "Do you need help coming up with a solution?"
- **Brainstorm together:** If your child wants to find a solution, work towards an answer together, rather than forcing her to do what you think is best. Role play different scenarios and help your child find one that she feels comfortable trying.
- **Keep the conversation open:** Friendships change rapidly, your child is going to need to talk often. Encourage open communication in the future by ending the conversation with, "If you ever want to talk more about this, I'm here for you."
- **Talk regularly about friendships:** Find ways to use books, TV shows or examples from your own life to talk about how to be a good friend, how to stand up for victims of bullying or how to be confident when faced with peer pressure.

Overcoming challenges and dealing with emotions can be difficult.

It is important to recognise this, and continuously praise your child when they use strategies to overcome these challenges.

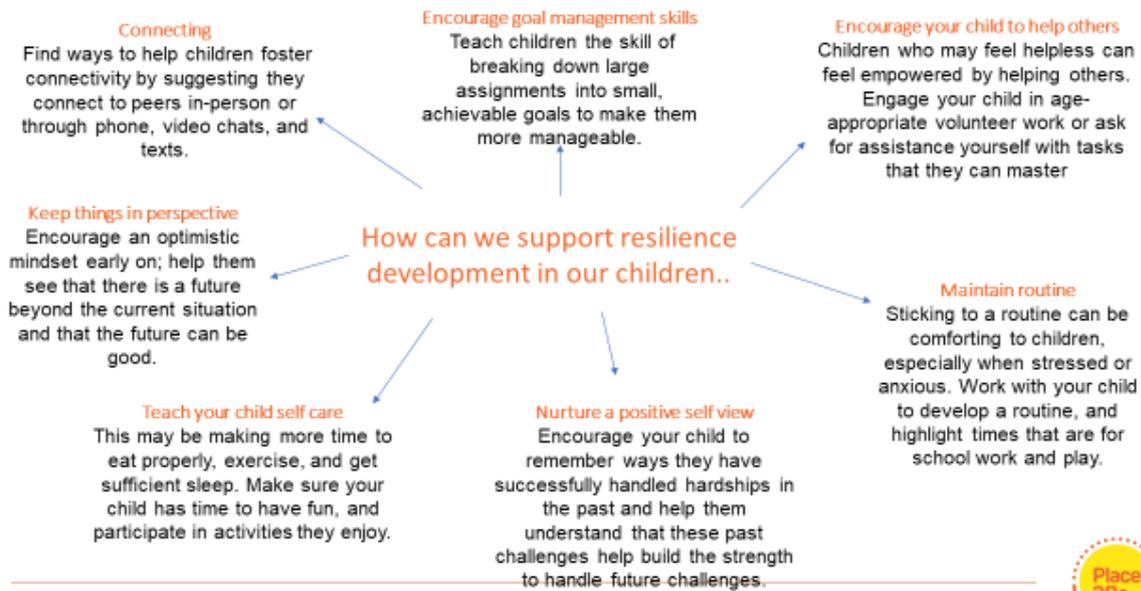
Doing this will reinforce this behaviour in future.



How praise can affect resilience..

Research shows praise directly affects a child's beliefs about why they succeed or failed. It leads to increased persistence, self-evaluation, motivation and resilience when students encounter obstacles and setbacks. Academically, praise can lead to increased learning and higher achievement.





The importance of your role..

Being an attachment figure for a vulnerable child is demanding.

Think about your own resilience and coping strategies, ensuring you seek support from others when needed and set time aside for your own self care.





Reflective activity..

Think of a story book, rhyme or film you use with your child that you can promote a message of resilience..

- How does it promote examples of bounce-backability?
- What relevant themes could you highlight?

Write your suggestion down on a piece of paper for us to share with each other after this session...

Some resources which can support resilience development..

- Create an affirmations jar with your child to promote self worth and self esteem.
- Discussing the underlying meaning behind their favourite films, books and characters.
- Encourage your child to introduce themselves to others and initiate conversations.
- Create a goals ladder with your child to encourage them to break down tasks into manageable steps.
- Create an achievements display, no matter how big or small, everything will be celebrated.



Helping Children To Overcome These 3 Common Friendship Challenges

The following are challenges children regularly face as they navigate friendships with others and tips on how to help your child manage these difficult situations.

1. Bossiness

Bossiness is a frequent issue in childhood friendships, especially with younger children. This is partly because children are still learning to express their wants and needs.

If your child is being bossy...

- *Remind them to ask for what they want respectfully, rather than demanding it. Explain that although they can ask people for something, people have the right to say no. In the same way, she has the right to say no to others.*
- *Give them the words to say instead. Simply saying, "Be nice" is not specific enough to be helpful to young children. For instance, if your child says, "I want the orange ball! You play with the red ball!" tell her, "Instead, say, 'I would like to play with the orange ball. Will you play with the red ball?'" The more you can provide children with respectful phrasing in context, the more they'll learn important social-emotional skills.*
- *Provide your child with choices. Sometimes children who are bossy are simply trying to have some degree of control over their lives. For younger children, offer only two choices to keep it simple. For older children, you may offer 3-5 choices. For instance, you might ask your child whether she would like to wear her blue shirt or her pink shirt to the party. Would she like cereal or toast? Does she want to pick up the blocks first, or the dolls? Even if the choices are small, giving your child more autonomy may reduce the urge to boss others around.*
- *Recognise and encourage the improvement as your child begins using manners and making requests more politely (e.g., "You did it! You were kind and respectful.").*

If your child is being bossed around... What if your child is the one being bossed around by others?

- *Role-play. Practise scenarios in which a child is behaving bossily, then have your child practise responding politely, but assertively.*
- *Give them the words to say. For instance, you might practise saying, "I don't want to play with the blocks right now. Maybe I will play with the blocks later." Or "I like you but I don't like it when you tell me I always have to be it in the game."*
- *If the bossy child responds by insulting your child, have your child practise saying, "I don't like it when you call me names. Please call me by name instead." Assertiveness is a difficult skill even for adults, so children often need lots of practise.*

2. Exclusion

Talk to your child about the importance of including others. Teach kindness and empathy. Encourage your child to talk to others who may not have many friends. Model kindness and acceptance of others in your daily life.

If your child is being excluded...

If your child is being excluded by others, your natural tendency is to rush in and protect them. You may want to say mean things about the other children, try to solve the problem for your child, or shield your child from the hurt and rejection she's feeling. We all understand the natural human desire to be liked and accepted.

Still, we can't save our children from these difficult experiences. Instead, we should teach them how to cope with and manage them. If the situation occurs again, your child will have the skills to handle it, whether you are there or not.

When your child talks to you about being excluded by others, listen. Don't rush in with solutions or anger toward the other children, and do not overreact. Simply listen and help your child process the emotions she is feeling.

Instil confidence and the understanding that what others think about her does not define her or change who she is. In fact, what others think about her is shaped by their own life experiences, beliefs, and preferences. It has everything to do with them and nothing to do with her.

Use analogies. For example, you can use the example of watching a movie. If a group of people watches a movie together, any movie, some will love it, and some will hate it. Some will think it's OK. Yet everyone watched the same movie.

Encourage your child to celebrate who she is, rather than fearing what others will think of her. The people who enjoy her genuine personality are the people she should call friends.

Ask her to list her positive qualities. Remind her of the things that make her unique and wonderful.

Make a friendship tree, listing all the friends she knows in all areas of life. Who are her friends at school, on her sports teams, in the neighbourhood, at clubs etc.? This activity can remind your child of all the positive friendships she does have, rather than focusing on a few children who exclude her.

Cast a wide net. Involve your child in extracurricular activities and help her expand her social circle. If exclusion is happening in one place, like school, she'll still have a positive support system on her football team or in her karate class.

Talk with your child about how to cope with situations that make her feel left out or hurt. Different children may cope in different ways, so discuss and experiment with different strategies. It may help your child to take deep breaths, to write or draw, to silently recite positive affirmations, or to remember that she will spend time with her football friends after school.

3. Arguments

Friendships inevitably involve disagreements from time to time. It's important to teach children how to handle these disagreements in a healthy manner. The following steps can help:

Model peaceful conflict resolution. Demonstrate taking deep breaths to remain calm, using "I feel" statements rather than attacking statements, listening to both sides of an issue, and then trying to solve the problem and/or come to a compromise.

Set clear rules against unhealthy behaviours like a door slamming, sarcasm, ridicule, name-calling, and physical harm.

When your child has disagreements, remind them of the peaceful conflict resolution strategies you use in your home. It's okay to walk away and take a few deep breaths to collect yourself. When you're ready, share your point of view using respectful language, such as, "I felt hurt when you laughed at me."

Next, listen to the other person's point of view without interrupting. Assume that the person is doing their best and did not do anything intentionally malicious. If necessary, make amends with a high five or a handshake and come up with a mutual resolution.

Explain to your child that in a friendship, they shouldn't be trying to "win" arguments. Instead, they should work together to find a solution that satisfies both people. And although it's okay to feel sad or angry, and it's okay to disagree, it is not okay to be disrespectful or cruel to others, and it is not okay for others to be disrespectful or cruel to them.

Seeing your child struggle with friendships doesn't get easier, but these tools will give you positive, productive responses that allow your child to move forward with new coping strategies and friendship skills.