



# Parenting for Prevention: *Resilience*

**Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg**  
*The 7C's Model of Resilience*

## What is Resilience?

Simply stated, *resilience* is the capability to overcome difficult situations, allowing us to move forward confidently even in the midst of adversity or hardship. As parents, our instinct may be to step in when our child faces adversity and try to solve a problem for them, or perhaps even shield them from challenges so as to avoid hardship altogether. In fact, quite the opposite is true! The best thing we can do is support them through difficult situations, foster appropriate problem-solving skills and coping strategies, and help them to apply those lessons to future experiences.

### RESILIENCE & STRESS

Stress is a normal part of life. Some stress is good - it encourages us to work harder, try new things or tackle a positive risk. Other stress is bad - it interferes with our ability to accomplish tasks and can take a toll on our physical and mental health.

Resilience develops over time as we learn more effective life-skills that can help to mitigate occurrences of bad stress. Supportive relationships with parents, peers & others, as well as cultural beliefs and traditions that help us cope with life's challenges all inform person's resilience.

Children can work on developing attitudes and behaviors to build resilience that can help influence their ability to manage stress:

- ✓ Think of change as a challenging and normal part of life.
- ✓ Believe that you will succeed if you keep working toward your goals.
- ✓ Take action to solve problems that arise.
- ✓ Build strong relationships and keep commitments to family and friends.
- ✓ Have a support system and ask for help.
- ✓ Participate regularly in activities for relaxation and fun.

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<p><b>Competence:</b> Describes the feeling of knowing that you can handle a situation effectively. We can help the development of competence by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Helping children focus on individual strengths</li> <li>~ Empowering children to make decisions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Confidence:</b> A child's belief in his own abilities is derived from competence. Build confidence by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Focusing on the best in each child so that he/she can see that, as well</li> <li>~ Recognizing when he or she has done well</li> </ul>
<p><b>Connections:</b> The development of close ties to family &amp; community, creating a sense of security, helping lead to strong values and preventing alternative destructive paths to love and attention. Help your child connect with others by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Building a sense of physical safety &amp; emotional security within your home</li> <li>~ Allowing the expression of all emotions, so that kids feel comfortable reaching out during difficult times</li> </ul>
<p><b>Character:</b> The set of morals and values to determine right from wrong and to demonstrate a caring attitude toward others. To strengthen your child's character, start by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Demonstrating how behaviors affect others</li> <li>~ Helping your child recognize himself or herself as a caring person</li> </ul>
<p><b>Contribution:</b> Children must realize that the world is a better place because we are in it and understand that personal contribution can serve as a source of purpose and motivation. Teach your children how to contribute by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Stressing the importance of serving others by modeling generosity</li> <li>~ Creating opportunities for each child to contribute in some specific way</li> </ul>
<p><b>Coping:</b> Learning to cope effectively with stress will help your child be better prepared to overcome life's challenges. Positive coping lessons include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Modeling positive coping strategies on a consistent basis</li> <li>~ Guiding your child to develop positive and effective coping strategies</li> </ul>
<p><b>Control:</b> Children who realize they can control the outcomes of their decisions are more likely to realize that they have the ability to bounce back. Your child's understanding that he or she can make a difference further promotes competence and confidence. You can try to empower your child by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Helping your child understand that most of life's events are not purely random, but happen as a result of another individual's choices &amp; actions</li> <li>~ Learning that discipline is about teaching, not punishing or controlling</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">For more strategies: <a href="https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Building-Resilience/Pages/The-7-Cs-Model-of-Resilience.aspx">https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Building-Resilience/Pages/The-7-Cs-Model-of-Resilience.aspx</a></p>

# 5 Steps to Fostering Resilience in Your Child

## Modeling Resilience

One of the best things we can do as parents, but also one of the hardest at times, is to model resiliency. To do this, we must be aware of our own feelings around loss, failure or uncertainty. When we can identify our own coping strategies for difficult situations, we can better support our children during theirs.

## Empathy

Show your child that you understand what he/she is feeling. Use words such as, "Wow, that must be disappointing/frustrating that you lost the game." Validating their feelings helps build self-esteem and resiliency.

## Making Meaning

When your child is ready to talk further, ask him/her questions to help your child understand the situation better and give them a sense of control. For example, "Do you think you didn't do well on the test because you didn't prepare as well as you should have?"

## Tolerating Uncertainty

Things may happen in our lives over which we have no control. For example, a family member's illness can be frightening because it may not make sense to a child. Using empathy to acknowledge their feelings and talking with them to make meaning of the situation can reassure their fears and help them cope.

## Problem Solving

Children don't have the benefit of a lifetime of experiences to pull from when confronting a new problem. To thrive, children must learn from mistakes, but need your help to develop constructive decision-making skills. Try brainstorming or role-playing with your child to help them find their own solutions.

Adapted from 5 Steps to Fostering Resilience in your Child. GoodTherapy.org July 22, 2014 Ruth Wyatt MA, LCSW

Information included on this tip sheet was adapted from some of the following resources

**American Psychological Association: Resilience Guide for Parent & Teachers**

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/resilience.aspx>

**Best Start**

[http://www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy\\_chld\\_dev/pdf/BSRC\\_Resilience\\_English\\_fnl.pdf](http://www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy_chld_dev/pdf/BSRC_Resilience_English_fnl.pdf)

**HealthyChildren.org**

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Building-Resilience/Pages/The-7-Cs-Model-of-Resilience.aspx>

**Kenneth Ginsburg, M.D., M.S. Ed, Ph.D.- Fostering Resilience: 7C's**

[http://www.fosteringresilience.com/7cs\\_parents.php](http://www.fosteringresilience.com/7cs_parents.php)

**Kenneth Ginsburg, M.D., M.S. Ed, Ph.D.: Building Resilience in Children & Teens and Raising Kids to Thrive**

[www.fosteringresilience.com/books.php](http://www.fosteringresilience.com/books.php)

RESOURCES

Parenting for Prevention is a Decisions at Every Turn Coalition educational series for parents and other caring adults to increase awareness and knowledge about important youth issues and to encourage dialogue about making healthy choices.

Please visit <http://www.AshlandDecisions.org/parent-tip-sheets.html> for our complete library of tip sheets.

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