

# resilience  
# publichealth5-19service



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# RESILIENCE FACTSHEET

This factsheet will provide you with tips to help build your child's resilience and helpful links to websites.

## TOP TIPS TO BUILD RESILIENCE:

1. **Maintain a daily routine and establish boundaries:** this can be reassuring to children as they need structure in their lives. Encourage your child to develop his or her own routines with your support. Established boundaries help a child to cope and feel safe as well as providing structure to help them determine right from wrong.
2. **Teach your child good self-care:** be a role model, show and teach your child the importance of making time to eat properly, exercise and rest.
  - Aim for a balanced diet that is low in fat, sugar and salt and includes 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day ([www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx)). Ensure your child has breakfast each morning. Drinking 6-8 glasses of fluid daily is also important to maintain health. A good diet enables the brain and body to work well. Encouraging your child to get involved in growing fruit and vegetables at home or help with making meals will give them some responsibility and a sense of achievement.
  - Children need 60 minutes of exercise daily to maintain good health. Regular exercise and being outdoors increases the endorphins (chemicals released by the brain) which has a positive effect on mood.
  - Primary school children need on average between 10-11.5 hours' sleep per night. Not enough, poor or interrupted sleep can affect school and home life. Good sleep hygiene and routine should be encouraged. Avoid stimulating electronic games 2 hours before bedtime and no TV, computers or phones in the bedroom.

3. **Have fun and play together:** play is essential to growing up. Playing games such as board games helps a child to learn to manage their impulsive behaviour, take turns, solve problems and connect with others. Encouraging children to take part in different activities gives them opportunity to find something they may enjoy, be good at and learn new skills. Having fun, hugs and smiles will help your child stay balanced and better deal with worries.
4. **Connect:** children thrive when they feel loved, understood and safe. A child's close ties to family and community with at least one supportive caring person can help to create this comfort and safety. Close family and friends can provide support to a child when they face disappointments or are upset. Teach your child how to make friends, encourage your child to be a friend in order to get a friend by showing kindness to each other, sharing things and playing together.
5. **Help others:** ask your child to help you with a task that they can master. Helping others can make a child feel valued as well as a sense of achievement when the task is accomplished.
6. **Teach problem solving skills and goal setting:** this is a learned skill, help your child to learn to solve their own problem. Help them to focus on one small problem at a time rather than the bigger picture to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Questions to consider asking, *what do they need to do? How might they do it? And who can help? Or what has worked before?* Try using a capable role model as an example e.g. Wonder Woman and ask *what would she do?*

Setting realistic goals that can be achieved through small steps will create a sense of purpose and help a child to see what they are capable of. Giving praise along the way will help them to focus on what has been accomplished so far. However it is also important to let a child know that it is ok to ask for help. Support them towards doing what they can by themselves rather than doing it for them. Build ambition by encouraging your child to think to the future, about what they would like to do beyond school or a career as an adult. Help your child see that change is a normal part of life and new goals can be swapped for goals that have become unachievable.

7. **Being brave and facing the fear:** this enables your child to face uncomfortable, scared feelings with support, instead of relying on others to sort it out. Remind your child they can do hard things, use examples of when they have been brave previously to acknowledge their bravery, strength and effort when facing their current difficulty. This will build confidence and a sense of being capable. They will then feel more able to deal with worries and challenges as they arise. Rather than avoiding a fear altogether it is better to have a gradual exposure to it which helps to a child to feel more at ease and have greater confidence with it.
8. **Try new activities:** find opportunities that encourage your child to take a risk and try something new. Support them to plan the activity then review it to help them see what worked well and not so well. This will encourage them to think about making decisions and



how to cope with things that go wrong. It can show that attempting to do something brave and difficult is more important than the outcome.

9. **Acknowledge that it is ok to make mistakes or fail:** rather than viewing an event such as a poor test result as a failure or a huge mistake, help your child to see it as a learning opportunity. *What have they learnt from the experience? What can they do differently next time?* Talking about failures they have overcome can make them a role model for others. Use story books to show how others have overcome adversity or faced a difficult situation.
10. **Encourage optimism:** if your child tends to have a glass half empty view of a situation acknowledge their view but show them an alternative. In times of difficulty help your child to focus on what they have rather than what they may have lost, acknowledge the disappointment but move towards an opportunity it may have created. Avoid catastrophising a situation and keep a hopeful, positive outlook.
11. **Model resiliency:** be a positive role model, let them see how you deal with difficult situations and bring them into your emotional world when appropriate. It will help a child see they are all normal human experiences and that they are not abnormal in having difficulties in life.
12. **Let them talk:** Allow time to listen with interest to your child without judging. Try to resist solving their problems and help them explore their own solutions to a problem. Always answer questions truthfully but provide a level of information that is age-appropriate. Situations outside the home can appear scary to children, news is constantly available through many media sources, you may need to limit the amount of news your children have access to as constant exposure can fuel fears and anxiety. It is important not to hide what is going on in the world but moderate how and when your children learn about it.
13. **Understanding and managing feelings and behaviours:** helping your child to recognise how they are feeling and behaving will increase their capacity to develop coping strategies. Let them see that all emotions are ok and when they are feeling distressed or sad that these feelings don't last forever, that they will pass; it's a normal response to a difficult situation. Use a mood chart to help them recognise their emotions and how they are feeling or behaving. Talk about what activities might help improve how they are feeling such as going for a walk together, cuddling their favourite teddy or playing a game. Help a child understand and be aware of other people's feelings too. This helps them to be able to have empathy, get along with others, be happy and make friends. Remember also to have a laugh together, humour is useful to bond with others and children love being silly.



# VISIT THESE USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://parentinfo.org/>

Information for parents and carers about their children's wellbeing and resilience

[www.parenting.org.uk](http://www.parenting.org.uk)

Information for parents to help their child develop self-control and positive points for parents to manage behaviour.

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Wide range of downloadable publications on keeping children safe with you or out alone.

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

Information for parents on keeping children safe and emotional wellbeing

[www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)

Bereavement website for children and their parents. Downloadable resources available.

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Information for parents and young people on all aspects of mental health and emotional wellbeing.

[www.sleepforkids.org](http://www.sleepforkids.org)

Website for parents and young people about sleep and how to get a good sleep routine.

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/mentalhealth/Pages/talkingtochildren.aspx>

NHS advice and information about talking to your child about feelings.

<http://understandingchildhood.net/documents/15CPTkeystages.pdf>

Leaflet for parents identifying key stages in your child's emotional development from The Child Psychotherapy Trust.

