

The 7 C's: Building Resilience in Children

Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg has identified seven "C"s of resilience, recognizing that "resilience isn't a simple, one-part entity." Parents can use these guidelines to help their children recognize their abilities and inner resources.

Competence

Competence describes the feeling of knowing that you can handle a situation effectively. We can help the development of competence by:

- Helping children focus on individual strengths
- Focusing any identified mistakes on specific incidents
- Empowering children to make decisions
- Being careful that your desire to protect your child doesn't mistakenly send a message that you don't think he or she is competent to handle things
- Recognizing the competencies of siblings individually and avoiding comparisons

Confidence

A child's belief in his own abilities is derived from competence. Build confidence by:

- Focusing on the best in each child so that he or she can see that, as well
- Clearly expressing the best qualities, such as fairness, integrity, persistence, and kindness
- Recognizing when he or she has done well
- Praising honestly about specific achievements; not diffusing praise that may lack authenticity
- Not pushing the child to take on more than he or she can realistically handle

Connection

Developing close ties to family and community creates a solid sense of security that helps lead to strong values and prevents alternative destructive paths to love and attention. You can help your child connect with others by:

- Building a sense of physical safety and emotional security within your home.
- Reaching out during difficult times
- Addressing conflict openly in the family to resolve problems
- Creating a common area where the family can share time (not necessarily TV time)
- Fostering healthy relationships that will reinforce positive messages and allowing the expression of all emotions, so that kids will feel comfortable

Character

Children need to develop a solid 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:

- Demonstrating how behaviors affect others
- Helping your child recognize himself or herself as a caring person

- Demonstrating the importance of community
- Encouraging the development of spirituality
- Avoiding racist or hateful statements or stereotypes

Contribution

Children need to realize that the world is a better place because they are in it. Understanding the importance of personal contribution can serve as a source of purpose and motivation. Teach your children how to contribute by:

- Communicating to children that many people in the world do not have what they need
- Stressing the importance of serving others by modeling generosity
- Creating opportunities for each child to contribute in some specific way

Coping

Learning to cope effectively with stress will help your child be better prepared to overcome life's challenges. Positive coping lessons include:

- Modeling positive coping strategies on a consistent basis
- Guiding your child to develop positive and effective coping strategies
- Realizing that telling him or her to stop the negative behavior will not be effective
- Understanding that many risky behaviors are attempts to alleviate the stress and pain in kids' daily lives
- Not condemning your child for negative behaviors and, potentially, increasing his or her sense of shame

Control

Children who realize that 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:

- Learning that discipline is about teaching, not punishing or controlling; using discipline to help your child to understand that his actions produce certain consequences
- Helping your child to understand that life's events are not purely random and that most things that happen are the result of another individual's choices and actions.

Article by Bonny McClain, Healthy Children Magazine, Winter 2007

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