

Resilience in Children:

How can you widen the circle when working towards building resilience in children?

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.” - Frederick Douglass Resilient people feel the same stressors as others, yet they overcome these issues by using their previous experiences and their support systems. Having a good social network is key for the overall well-being of children and the adults who care for them. Simply knowing you are not alone can make a significant difference to one’s health, but having trusted friends and a social support system is best.

Widening the circle or increasing the social support for youngsters includes fostering friendships, spending time with family and the community, as well as exploring their place in their culture and the world. Friendships through schools, family, neighborhoods, scouts, and sports are critical for kids to connect with peers and learn about getting back up again when something goes wrong. Having those friends, who know our background and potential, around when we are low is crucial. In building these relationships, not only will children grow with confidants in their age group, but they will also have guidance from teachers, coaches, guidance counselors and elder family members.

Parents and adults also need to model resilience in the way they deal with loss and change to show kids what getting through tough times looks like. A sense of connectedness to family, friends, community, co-workers is essential for resiliency. These environments supply love, attention and needed stress relief. Social programs like unemployment services or family medical leave act can supply financial support, which relieves the worry about how the bills will get paid if one is laid off or takes time away from work to support a sick family member. Not having those worries contributes to bouncing back quicker after a job loss or familial illness. Doing what is necessary for your own health sets a good example for the youngsters around you.

In conclusion, ensuring you and your children have emotional and instrumental support systems is invaluable for resilience. Changes, loss, and disappointments are all a part of life. Teaching your children to ask trusted peers and adults for help and making sure they know they are not alone will give them the skills and confidence to find themselves and move on when challenges happen in their lives.

References:

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