

# Adverse Childhood Experiences & Resilience

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## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

All children experience adversity over the course of their elementary school years. ACEs put children at risk for disrupted brain development and increased risk for later health problems and mortality (Woods-Jaeger et al., 2018).

ACEs include:

- trauma exposure
- parent mental health problems
- family dysfunction
  - (Woods-Jaeger et al., 2018)
- stress
- peer pressure
- demanding schedules & responsibilities
- media messages
- parental separation
- financial hardship
- loss of a loved one
- bullying
  - (Ginsburg & Jablow, 2015)



## Benefits of Resilience

Resilience is the capacity to cope effectively with internal and external stresses (Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovitch, and Ungar, 2005). Resilience helps children cope effectively with ACEs. Resilient children:

- are better equipped to deal with future challenges (Woods-Jaeger et al., 2018)
- see challenges as opportunities
- are more likely to seek solutions
- are less likely to engage in self-doubt, catastrophic thinking, or victimization (Ginsburg & Jablow, 2015)

## Protective Factors

Protective factors “protect” children from ACEs and increase resilience. Examples include:

- Sufficient level of self-esteem
- Active approach to problem-solving
- Autonomy
- Optimism
- Consistent nurturing from parents
- Multi-age network of relatives
- Structure and rules (Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovitch, and Ungar, 2005)



## How to Foster Resilience in Your Child

- Increase protective factors.
- Limit ACEs.
- Be consistent with structure and discipline.
- Help develop your child's social skills.
- Play an active role in your child's life.
  - (Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovitch, and Ungar, 2005)
- Promote open-communication, expressions of love, and close family relationships (Woods-Jaeger et al., 2018).
- Form a close, nurturing relationship with your child (Tough, 2012).
- Give your child unconditional love and a sense of security.
- Lead by example: Parents are models for coping with stress. Show your child how to handle stress in a healthy way.
- Demonstrate high expectations. Children live up or down to their parent's expectations.
- Listen. Listening to your child attentively is more important than the words you say.
- Build up your child's confidence.
- Teach your child a sense of responsibility and control over what happens to them.
- Teach your child positive coping strategies.
- Surround your child with positive, supportive adults. Children's ability to thrive is deeply affected by the community of adults that surround them.
  - (Ginsburg, 2015).

## Resources

### How to Raise an Emotionally Resilient Child

Kenneth Barish, Ph.D.

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/expert-tips-advice/2015/11/how-to-raise-an-emotionally-resilient-child/>

### Building Resilience to Cope with Stress

Dr. Lyn O'Grady

<https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/health-and-community/enewsletter/building-resilience-cope-stress>

### Resilience Guide for Parents & Teachers

American Psychological Association

<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/resilience>

### Raising Resilient Children

Audrey Krisbergh

<https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/self-esteem/raising-resilient-children/>

### The Key to Raising Resilient Children

Mark Bertin, Sharon Salzberg, & Christopher Willard

<https://www.mindful.org/the-key-to-raising-resilient-children/>

## Contact Me

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Ginsburg, K. R., & Jablow, M. M. (2015). *Building Resilience in Children and Teens* (3rd ed.). Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics.

Tough, P. (2013). *How Children Succeed*. Boston, MA: Mariner Books.

Woods-Jaeger, B. A., PhD, Cho, B., MA, Sexton, C. C., PhD, MSW, Slagel, L., MPH, & Goggin, K., PhD. (2018). Promoting Resilience: Breaking the Intergenerational Cycle of Adverse Childhood Experiences. *Health Education & Behavior*, 45(5), 772-780. doi:10.1177/1090198117752785