

About Parenting NI

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Promoting Resilience

Aim:

To enhance practitioner knowledge
and skills of building resilience in
young children

Objectives

- To understand the importance of developing resilience in young children
- To reinforce the importance of building caring relationships
- To promote the importance of being a positive role model for young children
- To recognise the importance of developing self-control and building self-regulation
- To explore the importance of developing thinking skills
- To explore how to source additional information and support

Healthy development in the early years provides;

- Building blocks for educational achievement
- Economic productivity
- Responsible citizenship
- Lifelong health
- Strong communities
- Successful parenting of the next generation

Advances in neuroscience now give us a much better understanding of how early experiences are built into our bodies and brains, for better or for worse.

What is resilience?

Resilience is:

The science of resilience can help us understand why some children do well despite serious adversity. Resilience is a combination of protective factors that enable people to adapt in the face of serious hardship, and is essential to ensuring that children who experience adversity can still become healthy, productive citizens.

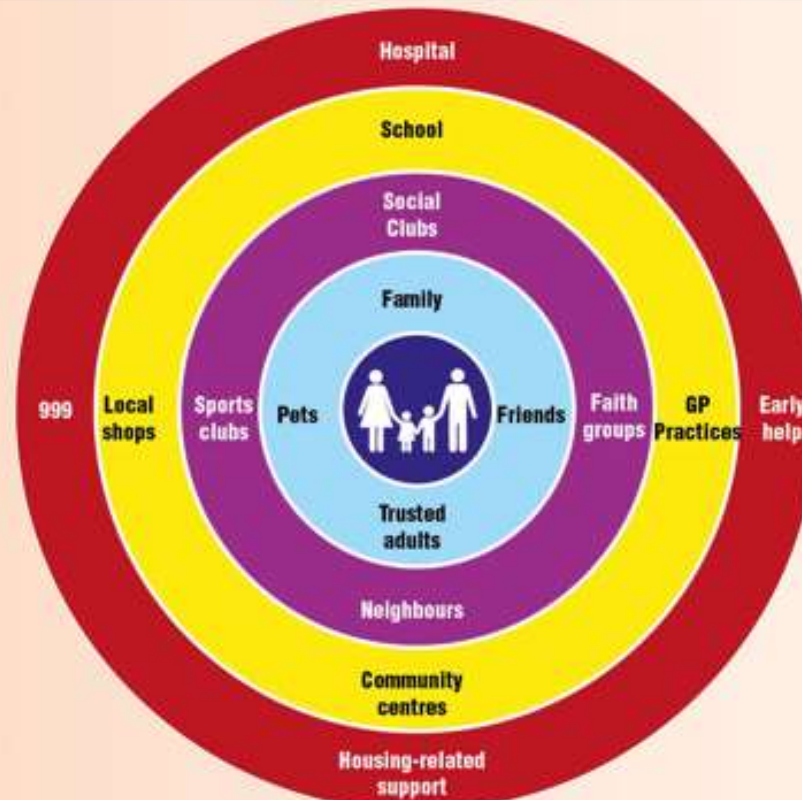
- Children are not born resilience, resilience can be developed.
- Resilience is not for the genetically blessed and can be strengthened at any age.
- One of the most exciting findings in the last decade or so is that we can change the wiring of the brain through the experiences we expose it to.
- The right experiences can shape the individual, intrinsic characteristics of a child in a way that will build their resilience.



Adverse
Childhood
Experiences

Be the Change

Being Involved and Connected



"Formal and informal social support both matter"
(Gilligan, 2008)

1. Experience builds brain architecture

Genes provide the basic blueprint, but experiences influence how or whether genes are expressed. Together, they shape the quality of brain architecture and establish either a sturdy or a fragile foundation for all of the learning, health, and behaviour that follows.

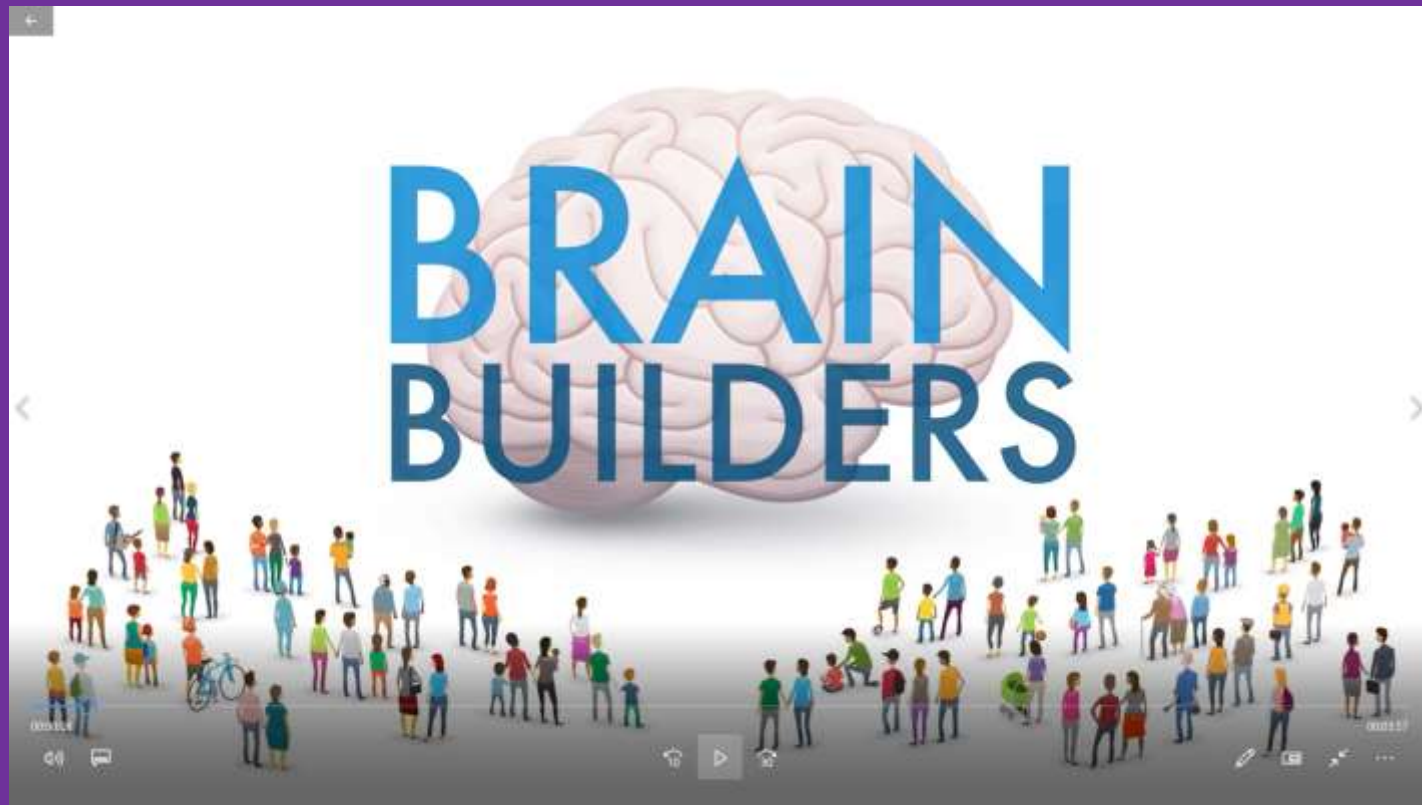
2. Serve and return interaction shapes brain circuitry

Young children naturally reach out for interaction through babbling, facial expressions, and gestures, and adults respond with the same kind of vocalizing and gesturing back at them. This back-and-forth process is fundamental to the wiring of the brain, especially in the earliest years.

3. Toxic stress derails healthy development

Without caring adults to buffer children, the unrelenting stress caused by extreme poverty, neglect, abuse, or severe maternal depression can weaken the architecture of the developing brain, with long-term consequences for learning, behaviour, and both physical and mental health

How a child's brain develops through early experiences:



<https://youtu.be/hMyDFYSkZSU>

8 things to remember about child development

1. Even infants and young children are affected adversely when significant stresses threaten their family and caregiving environments
2. Development is a highly interactive process, and life outcomes are not determined solely by genes
3. While attachments to their parents are primary, young children can also benefit significantly from relationships with other responsive caregivers both within and outside the family
4. A great deal of brain architecture is shaped during the first three years after birth but the window of opportunity for its development does not close on a child's third birthday

5. Severe neglect appears to be at least as great a threat to health and development as physical abuse-possibly even greater
6. Young children who have been exposed to adversity of violence do not invariably develop stress related disorders or grow up to be violent adults.
7. Simply removing a child from a dangerous environment will not automatically reverse the negative impacts of that experience
8. Resilience requires relationships

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/8-things-remember-child-development/>

Why is resilience in children so important?

- Children are able to handle difficult situations
- Have self belief
- Be more empathetic
- Have problem solving skills
- Better communication
- Improved learning and educational attainment
- Reduction in risk taking behaviours
- Lower rate of mortality and increased physical health
- Increased involvement within the community
- Have a more positive outlook on life
- Can identify and deal with their feelings
- Enjoy better mental health

How is resilience built?

- Setbacks are a normal part of life.
- Keep things in perspective.
- Promote a good sense of humour.
- Encourage taking responsibility.
- Encourage persistence in goals.
- Reassure that support and advice is available.
- Learn from past experiences.



<https://youtu.be/xSf7pRpOgu8>

The language of resilience

I HAVE...

External resources and supports

People around me I trust and who love me no matter what.

People who set limits for me so I know when to stop before there is danger or trouble.

People who show me how to do things right, by the way they do things.

People who want me to learn to do things on my own.

People who help me when I am sick, in danger or need to learn.

I AM...

Personal/ internal strengths

A person people
can like and love.

Glad to do nice
things for others
and show my
concern.

Respectful of
myself and
others.

Willing to be
responsible for
what I do.

Sure things will
be alright.

I CAN...

Social and interpersonal skills

Talk to others
about things that
frighten or
bother me.

Find ways to
solve problems
I face.

Control myself
when I feel like
doing
something wrong
or dangerous.

Figure out when
it is a good time
to talk to
someone or
take action.

Find someone to
help me when I
need it.

I have, I am and I can

I have: What are your external supports? E.g.
supportive family, agencies

I am: What are your personal strengths, attitudes &
beliefs? E.g. I am adaptable, I believe I am a good
person

I can: What are the social skills you can use? E.g.
communication, manage impulses

Children will have different levels of resilience and different ways of responding to and recovering from stressful times. They will also have different ways of showing when the demands that are being put upon them outweigh their capacity to cope. They might become emotional, they might withdraw, or they might become defiant, angry or resentful. Of course, even the most resilient of warriors have days where it all gets too much, but low resilience will likely drive certain patterns of behaviour more often.

20 strategies for improving resilience in children

1. Resilience needs relationships, not uncompromising independence
2. Increase their exposure to people who care about them;

3. Let them know that it's okay to ask for help

Children will often have the idea that being brave is about dealing with things by themselves. Let them know that being brave and strong means knowing when to ask for help. If there is anything they can do themselves, guide them towards that but resist carrying them there.

4. Build their executive functioning by:

- Establishing routines
- Modelling healthy social behaviour
- Creating and maintaining supportive reliable relationships around them
- Providing opportunities for their own social connections
- Creative play
- Board games
- Games that involve exercise
- Giving them opportunities to think and act
- Providing opportunities for them to make their own decisions

5. Encourage a regular mindfulness practice
6. Exercise
7. Build feelings of competence and a sense of mastery

8. Nurture optimism

9. Teach them how to reframe

10. Model resiliency

11. Facing fear – but with support

12. Encourage them to take safe,
considered risks.

13. Don't rush to their rescue
14. Meet them where they are
15. Nurture a growth mindset.
We can change, and so can other people
16. Let them know that you trust their capacity to cope

17. Build their problem-solving toolbox

- What would [someone who they see as capable] do?
- What has worked before?
- Say as many ideas as you can in two minutes, even the silly ones?
- How can we break this big problem into little pieces?

18. Make time for creativity and play

19. Shhh. Let them talk

20. Try, 'how', not 'why'

*“Unless someone like
you cares a whole
awful lot, Nothing is
going to get better.
It's not.”*

The Lorax, Dr. Seuss







Check Out



Thank you



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