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10 TIPS FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE

Tips for 5 - 12 year olds

1. Safety Is Key

Children will feel safe to explore the world and try new things if they have a safe, nurturing, and resilient adult that they can turn to for support.

2. Be A Good Role Model

Children learn from adults by watching, observing, and listening to their reactions and experiences...even when you think they are not! Take opportunities to role model problem solving skills and coping skills. Show them it is ok to fail.

3. Resist The Urge to Rescue

Your first instinct is to scoop them up in your arms and protect them. As hard as it will be for you, take a deep breath and resist the urge to jump in too quickly to "fix, rescue, and soothe" unless necessary.

4. Age Appropriate Independence

We often make the mistake of expecting more from children than they are developmentally ready for. Make sure that you are setting activities, chores and tasks that they can successfully navigate given their age and abilities.

5. Coach AND Cheerleader

When supporting your child with a new skill; first show them how to do it, step back and let them have a go, step in again when needed, step back again and cheerlead for both "successes" and "trying".

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6. Safe Exposure

If your child worries about trying new things, then follow these steps: prepare, plan, participate, praise, and repeat. For severe cases of anxiety, please seek the support of a professional to help both you and your child take smaller steps towards a bigger goal.

7. Risk Taking Is OK

Find opportunities to allow your child to participate in healthy risk taking behaviour. Try to avoid using language such as "Be careful!".

8. What Do You Notice?

Often adults notice what the child is doing "wrong" and takes the opportunity to help guide and teach. For example, "That's not the way we stack the dishwasher. We do it this way". To help build confidence and a sense of competence, try to notice and highlight your child's strengths. For example, "Wow! You tried to stack the dishwasher all by yourself. That is very thoughtful. You really showed initiative. Let's do it together". Notice moments of competence and confidence.

9. Practice Coping Skills

Children who learn to cope effectively with stress are better prepared for handling challenges in life. Teach a combination of strategies that soothe the body and ease the mind. The [Keep Calm Cards](#) created by Dr Kate Owen are 37 strategies that will teach you to cope with anxiety - suitable for all ages.

10. No mixed messages

Having a network of supportive adults who are on the same page is essential in building childhood resilience and a sense of safety and containment. It can be confusing if parents have vastly different approaches to supporting their child - one parent "rescues" while the other parent "pushes". This is also true of the collaboration between home and school. When parents and teachers work together, children flourish and thrive.