# Resilience Skills That Grow With Your Child

Resilience—the ability to adapt, recover, and grow through challenges—is a skill every child can strengthen with support from the adults in their lives. Use these age-appropriate strategies to help children build resilience at home.

## Pre-K: Ages 3–5

Young children learn resilience through relationships and routines. The goal is to help them feel safe, understood, and capable.

- **Name and normalize feelings.** Help children identify emotions with simple language: "You're sad because your tower fell." When kids learn that feelings come and go, they feel more in control.
- **Practice small problem-solving.** Encourage them to try again when something doesn't work, like rebuilding a block tower or putting on a shoe. Celebrate effort more than success.
- **Use predictable routines.** Consistent bedtime, mealtime, and play routines help children feel secure, which strengthens their ability to handle stress.
- **Model calm behavior.** Kids mirror adults. When caregivers take deep breaths or speak gently during frustration, children learn to do the same.

## Elementary: Ages 6–10

School-age children are ready to build more independence and confidence. Families can help them practice resilience in everyday situations.

- **Encourage a "try first" mindset.** When kids face a challenge, prompt them with questions like "What's one thing you could try?" This builds problem-solving skills.
- **Teach positive self-talk.** Help them replace "I can't do this" with "This is hard, but I can keep trying."
- **Create opportunities for responsibility.** Age-appropriate chores, caring for a pet, or helping a sibling build a sense of competence.



- **Talk openly about mistakes.** Share your own small mistakes and what you learned. This shows kids that setbacks are normal and manageable.

## Middle School: Ages 11–13

Tweens are navigating big emotions, social pressures, and growing independence. They need support that respects their maturity while still offering guidance.

- **Strengthen emotional awareness.** Encourage conversations about stress, friendships, and school challenges. Listen more than you fix.
- **Promote healthy coping strategies.** Journaling, physical activity, creative outlets, or quiet time can help them regulate emotions.
- **Support problem-solving and decision-making.** Instead of giving answers, ask questions that help them think through options and consequences.
- **Foster connection.** Regular family check-ins, shared meals, or simple rituals help tweens feel grounded and supported.

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