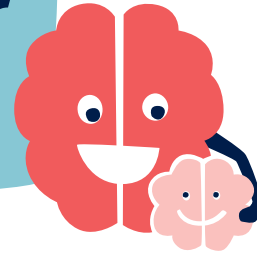


Building children's resilience: *A guide for parents and carers*

Parent Resource

This resource has been developed in collaboration with parenting educator, Maggie Dent



Resilience is a key part of our mental fitness, our ability to handle life's ups and downs, adapt to change, and keep going when things get tough.

A child's resilience is shaped by the world around them. Their home, school, community, and the village of people who support them all play a vital role. Like all aspects of mental fitness, resilience can be built and strengthened over time, especially with the right support.

Kids build resilience when they feel safe, supported, and encouraged. As parents and carers, the everyday ways we connect, comfort, and guide them lay the foundation for managing stress and bouncing back from tough times. By helping our kids strengthen their emotional muscles, we're also strengthening their ability to face life's challenges with confidence.

Why resilience matters

While young people have always faced challenges growing up, today's world brings new and complex pressures from academic stress and social media to global uncertainty and rapid change. These shifting demands can leave many children and teens feeling overwhelmed, and not all have the tools or support they need to manage stress in healthy ways.

That's why building resilience matters. When young people are equipped with strong coping skills and surrounded by supportive relationships, they're more likely to manage setbacks, handle pressure, and make positive choices, now and into the future.



Traits of resilient people

Resilient people tend to:

- Bounce back from setbacks and keep going in tough times
- Stay optimistic, flexible, and open to learning from challenges
- Set realistic goals and take steps toward them
- Know and manage their emotions
- Stay grounded in their values and sense of self
- Build strong, supportive relationships
- Live in the present and keep a healthy sense of perspective
- Use humour, connection, and problem-solving to navigate stress

What can I do to help my child build resilience?

Resilience isn't built in a day, it grows through everyday moments of support, encouragement, and connection. The small things you do consistently as a parent or carer can make a big difference in helping your child develop the skills and confidence they need to navigate life's ups and downs.

Here are some practical ways to strengthen your child's mental fitness and build resilience over time:

Connection beats perfection



Kids don't need perfect parents - they need safe, loving ones. A strong bond with at least one steady adult gives them the security to grow, fail, and bounce back.

- **Create a safe space:** Let them express their emotions without rushing to fix or correct
- **Validate feelings:** Say things like, "That sounds tough. I'm here with you"
- **Show up consistently:** A regular check-in before bed or after school builds trust

Let them fall (safely)



Building resilience means allowing kids to face challenges, take risks, and even experience boredom or disappointment. These moments help them learn to cope, problem-solve, and grow stronger.

- **Don't jump in too quickly:** Let them try to solve their own problems first
- **Encourage low-stakes risks:** Trying a new food, joining a new activity
- **Normalise failure:** Share your own setbacks and what you learned

Micro-moments matter



You don't need hours of "quality time" to build connection. Small, consistent moments of care and presence fill your child's emotional cup.

- **Create rituals of connection:** A secret handshake, a silly goodbye, or a "one good thing" chat at dinner
- **Use eye contact and smiles:** A warm look when they walk in makes a big impact
- **Join in their world:** Show genuine interest in their games, drawings, or latest obsession

A special thanks to Maggie Dent for her collaboration on these resources. Maggie is a parenting educator, author, and former teacher, widely respected for her practical, compassionate advice on raising resilient children. For more information on supporting your child's wellbeing, visit maggiedent.com

Please note: This resource has been developed in collaboration with Maggie Dent and is intended for general information purposes only. It's not a substitute for professional advice. Gotcha4Life does not offer counselling or crisis support.

If you have concerns about your child's wellbeing, please speak with your GP or a qualified health professional.

You can also explore a range of free, trusted supports and information at gotcha4life.org/help-resources. For direct support, Kids Helpline offers free, confidential counselling for young people aged 5 to 25. Call 1800 55 1800 or visit kidshelpline.com.au.