



Emotional Health, Resilience, and Language Growth

What is resilience? It is the ability to cope with a crisis and bounce back. Resilient people have protective factors that help them succeed and carry on, even when times are tough. These protective factors can be found in the environment (e.g., caring community, access to healthcare, needed resources, etc.), family (e.g., positive relationship with parents), and within the child. Many times, people assume that children are resilient; however, resilience may need to be directly modeled. Children who do not feel comfortable and secure will not have the brain reserves needed to grow with their language typically. A video on resilience from

Harvard's Center on the Developing Child can be found at

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-resilience-series/>.

Social and emotional health is an important protective factor to help handle life. Three of the key factors related to social/emotional development are:

- Attachments/Relationships (healthy relationships that begin in infancy);
- Self-Regulation (ability to show a range of feelings and control behavior in safe and healthy ways); and
- Initiative (independently use thoughts and actions to meet needs).

How to support resilience:

- Talk/sign to your child and respond to their communication.
- Have a routine.
- Accept a range of feelings and talk about expressing those feelings.
- Accept mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Show joy in your child's accomplishments and attempts.
- Play games together.
- Have set aside family time.
- Let your child help at home or plan activities.

"There are two ways to create a masterpiece. You can start with a lump of clay, or you can start with a hunk of marble. Traditionally, in helping children gain knowledge, we've taken the marble approach. We've taken our chisels and chipped away and chipped away at children until we have a pile of rubble. In many cases, they're very unhappy and not much better for our efforts. I suggest you shift your mindset to a way that is more in concert with the concept of resilience. You can start with a lump of clay. You can mold it and shape it and if it doesn't seem to be moving in the right direction, you can reshape it. It's a much more flexible and insightful approach. It's not that children are lumps of clay or pieces of marble but what is your mindset. When you work with a child, is it your mindset to chip away at them and fix what's wrong with them? Or is it your mindset to help shape, create, develop all that child can be regardless of what challenges this child brings to the world?"

Boosting Resilience and Stress Hardiness as Part of Language Intervention, by Sam Goldstein, PhD, ABPdN - part of the "Adolescent Language Beyond the Classroom" ASHA e-workshop