



# Building resilience in children

Resilience is something that can be fostered and developed over time. A combination of individual, family, community and societal factors influence children and young people's developing resilience.

## How can early learning services and schools build resilience?

Early learning services and schools are places where children and young people spend a great deal of their time. Learning communities play a key role in developing resilience through formal and informal learning opportunities. [Resilience](#) is key for developing positive mental health and wellbeing.

### Caring and supportive relationships

Strong relationships within the family can help at times of stress or adversity. This support and security is a protective factor for children and young people's mental health. You support healthy relationships by:

- promoting family-centred practice and reach out to families
- providing information to families on how they can support their child or young person develop resilience
- encouraging families to draw on the resources available in their community in times of need.

Research also indicates a positive relationship with at least one caring, competent adult outside of the child or young person's immediate family is related to greater mental health and resilience. As an educator, you might develop connections with children in your learning community which are based on warmth, empathy, and respect.

Connection to diverse groups of friends is also valuable. Even very young children develop a sense of self and self-confidence through their peer relationships. You can encourage healthy relationships by:

- promoting a welcoming, friendly and safe environment
- promoting inclusion, and address bullying, sexism and racism
- role modelling perspective-taking and compassion
- celebrating diversity
- teaching the skills to work together effectively (for example, communication skills)
- requiring cooperation (for example, structuring tasks that require working in small groups)

- empowering children and young people to ask for support.

### Setting high-but-achievable expectations of children and young people

Research has shown that high expectations give students the sense that educators care about them. You can assist by:

- exposing children and young people to manageable stress (for example, when you respond in a warm and sensitive manner, children and young people learn they are safe, that their needs will be taken care of and they'll be supported with their coping skills)
- making sure that goals are achievable by breaking down large tasks or responsibilities into small steps
- asking them questions to help them solve problems and promote further learning
- scaffolding their learning and help when necessary, without taking over.

### Provide opportunities for children and young people to participate

You can:

- view children and young people as capable contributors to their world (for example, by providing tasks that require a meaningful contribution, letting them make decisions and experience consequences)
- give them meaningful choices
- express your belief in their capacity to learn and contribute
- help them learn from mistakes
- teach values
- support them to express their views and listen to their views.

## Whole learning community strategies

### Whole learning community strategies to build resilience can include:

- implementing social and emotional learning programs within the curriculum to build emotional literacy, coping skills and resilience - find out

more information about evidence-based programs in the Be You [Programs Directory](#)

- ensuring support systems are in place (for example, a key educator to talk to, home room structures, provision of school counsellors or partnerships with external mental health professionals)
- ensuring policies reflect the most up-to-date knowledge on building resilience
- promoting partnerships with families and external support services.

### Be You Professional Learning

Check out how to incorporate practices that can enhance children and young people's into your teaching practice in the [Learning Resilience](#) domain. Learn about creating and maintaining strong partnerships with families in the [Family Partnerships](#) domain, and about providing support for children, young people and their families, by helping them access information and internal and external supports, in the [Provide](#) module.

## References

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## External links

- Australia Institute of Family Studies – [Is resilience still a useful concept when working with children and young people?](#)
- Beyond Blue – [Building resilience in children aged 0–12: A practice guide](#)
- [Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#)