

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Guide for Parents/Caregivers: Resiliency

Here is what we know about resiliency:

- It is the ability to steer through life's challenges and bounce back from hard times in a positive way.
- Resilience is developed throughout your life.
- Everyday interactions that are caring and positive build resilience skills.
- You play the biggest role in helping children develop strengths that support resilience.
- Research shows that resilience can be linked to higher levels of happiness, positive relationships & greater success in school, work, and life.

As a parent or caregiver, think about a child's age and developmental abilities, how can you:

- Take care of yourself to stay healthy during hard times?
Children watch and learn positive self-care strategies from you. For example, getting enough sleep, going for a walk, asking for help, etc.
- Practice staying calm when dealing with challenging behaviour or situations?
It is important to lead by example for children of any age. For example, count to 10, take a deep breath, reach out for support, etc.
- Comfort children when they are upset?
Support them to talk about their feelings and teach them calming strategies. For example, comfort with a hug, teach deep breathing, help them name their feelings "You seem to be frustrated".
- Encourage children to keep trying even when it is hard?
Help them learn that mistakes are ok. For example, break big tasks into smaller steps, celebrate their strengths and praise their efforts, "You worked hard to get your shoes on all by yourself".
- Create opportunities to share the positive moments in your day?
Having a positive outlook and being thankful helps to build resilience. For example, choose a time of day to name something positive from your day (mealtime, bedtime, etc.).
- Build a support system around you?
Parenting is not always easy. Having support can help you get through challenging moments. For example, reach out to supportive family, friends, community programs and resources.
- Know if your child's development is on track for their age?
It is important to have developmentally appropriate expectations of your child's ability and behaviour. For example, the [Looksee Checklist®](#) (formerly Nipissing District Developmental Screen®-NDDS) and the [Early Years Check-In](#) give activities and examples for each age and stage of development.

Where can you find more information?

- [Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development: Resilience](#)
- [Reaching IN ... Reaching OUT: Road to Resiliency Factsheet and Video](#)
- [Center of the Developing Child, Harvard University: Resilience](#)
- [Psychology Foundation of Canada: Parenting Information](#)
- [Parenting with LOVE: Role Modeling](#)
- [Best Start Resource. Building Resilience in Young Children](#)
- [Ottawa Public Health: MindMasters2](#)
- [24-Hour Movement and Activity Guidelines](#)

Where can you find support?

- [Parenting in Ottawa](#)
- [Parent Resource Centre](#)
- [211 Ontario](#)
- [Mental Health and Substance Use Services and Resources](#)