

Positive Relationships

Resiliency is a child's ability to bounce back from difficult circumstances. Relationships matter. The people we grow up with, the people we admire and the people we let into our lives all have a powerful influence in shaping who we are.

When you help your child to develop confidence and security, they will be better equipped to deal with the pressures that can come from belonging to a group of peers. They'll have the strength to support positive friendships, and to say no to things that make them uncomfortable or that they believe are not right. Here are a few ways you can teach your child to develop and participate in positive relationships with others.

Be a positive role model.

Role modeling is a part of every parent's and caregiver's role. It's not always easy being a role model, but it's important to keep in mind that what you say and do is one of the biggest influences on your child. Somebody's watching you!

Think about how your behavior affects your child. You can't always be calm and cheerful— nobody is. Besides, your child needs to see that you can express real feelings in a healthy way. As they grow up, they'll learn by your example. And they will have your example to follow in years to come, when they are coping with the challenges of adulthood.

Talk about feelings.

When we don't talk about feelings like loneliness or anger, these feelings hang around. They can get bottled up until eventually they spill over in some other way. Simply listening to your child can be a big help. It tells them that their feelings are important, and that you're willing to share those troubles. When you encourage your child to recognize feelings and talk about them, they will gain a better understanding of their problems. It also helps them to think about other people's feelings and problems.

All feelings are valid. When you take time to listen and encourage your child to express their feelings, you're building a trusting relationship that will help your child to know they can count on you for support.

Build your child's self-confidence.

Children who can face the world with confidence will be more likely to make healthy choices, and less likely to turn to alcohol, other drugs or gambling to ease the way in social situations. It is never too soon (or too late) to talk to your child about getting along with others, respecting other people's feelings, appreciating the value of real friends, and understanding their own worth as a unique person. Resiliency comes from being connected to people, finding common interests and participating in a community. That's why developing healthy relationship skills is so important to becoming resilient! A child with strong family support and well-developed social skills and abilities, such as decision-making skills and self-confidence, becomes a teen who is more likely to avoid ever having problems with alcohol, tobacco, other drugs or gambling.

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