10 Tips to Build Resilience

The ads make it look so easy to be a teen - everyone seems to be laughing, hanging out with friends, wearing exactly the right clothes. But if you remember being your own experience, you know that life can be pretty tough sometimes. You may face problems ranging from being bullied to the death of a friend or parent. You may be wondering why this is relevant in an elementary newsletter. The answer is “resilience”. Resilience- the ability to adapt well in the face of hard times isn't something you're born with or not. The skills of resilience can be learned. And what better time to learn than when children are at their most impressionable: elementary School. Children, whose brains are still developing and whose behavior has yet to settle into firm patterns, need skills development. Research shows that when parents and schools commit to teaching resilience skills everybody benefits: positive indicators, like student engagement, relationships between and among students and teachers, and kind behavior, go up. Negative indicators, like anxiety, conflict and bullying, go down. And the bonus: academic achievement improves — students’ work better when they feel better.

Here are some tips to help your children learn to be resilient?

1. **Get Together.** Talk with your children. Don't be afraid to express your opinion. Teach them the values you believe to be important. Help them get connected to your community, whether it's as part of a church group, scouting, or school group.

**2. Create A Safe Zone.** Make every effort to make home a "safe zone." No home is stress free and that is okay, It is important for children to learn from their parents that it is possible to deal with problems in a healthy way. However, home should be a place where children are free from “adult” stress and anxieties. Often parents have their own stresses, especially if something serious has just happened. Try to limit the exposure you children have to the problems of the adult world.

3. **Stick To The Program.**  During a time of major stress, routines are important. Routines give children comfort, whether it's the things you do before school, before bed or on holidays. Children can learn to take comfort in their own routines when faced with a problem.

4. **Take Care Of Yourself.** Be sure to encourage your children to take of themselves - physically, mentally and spiritually. And get sleep. There's a lot going on, and it's going to be tough to face if you're falling asleep on your feet.

5. **Take Control.** Even in the midst of tragedy, teach children to move toward goals one small step at a time. During a really hard time, just getting out of bed and going to school may be all they can handle, but even accomplishing that can help. Bad times make us feel out of control - grab some of that control back by taking decisive action.

6. **Express Yourself.** Tragedy can bring up a bunch of conflicting emotions. Sometimes, it's just too hard to talk to someone about what you're feeling. If talking isn't working, have your children learn to capture their emotions in another way, like starting a journal, or create art.

7. **Help Somebody.** Nothing gets your mind off your own problems like solving someone else's. Provide your children the opportunity to volunteer in your community or at your school, cleaning-up around the house or apartment, or helping a friend with his or her homework.

8. **Put Things In Perspective.** Children need to learn that eventually, things change and bad times end. Have them think back on a time when they faced up to your fears, whether it was asking a teacher a question or trying out for a team or part.

9. **Relaxation Techniques,** It is crucial for children to learn to relax. Whether it's thinking of a particular song in times of stress, or just taking a deep breath to calm down. Think about the important things that have stayed the same, even while the outside world is changing. When you talk about bad times, make sure you talk about good times as well.

10. **Turn It Off.** You as a parent may want to stay informed. But sometimes, the news, with its focus on the sensational, can add to the feeling that nothing is going right. Try to limit the amount of news your children take in, whether it's from television, newspapers or magazines, or the Internet. Watching a news report once informs you; watching it over and over again just adds to the stress and contributes no new knowledge.