



## On the road to resiliency

**RESILIENCY IN CHILDREN IS MORE THAN JUST BOUNCING** back from a difficult experience. It means entering into life's opportunities and meeting challenges feeling secure and confident. The time to begin your child on the road to resiliency is now, while your child is very young. Here are some things that build resiliency in your child.

**Demonstrate the love you feel for your child.** Every child needs to know she is valued for whom she is, and that she is precious to her parents. Without feeling loved, children cannot develop the inner resources to meet challenges and recover from them.

**Meet your baby's needs.** He learns to trust you and the world around him when you provide the love and care he craves. When babies learn from an early age that discomfort will be taken care of by mom and dad, they can weather the rough spots in life and anticipate that things can be better.

**Set and keep routines.** Making the world as predictable as possible teaches your child that she can rely on the world around her. Even when things are upsetting, relying on routines provide a means for your baby to cope.

**Encourage your baby to explore.** Support your child's desire to reach out and touch the world. Allow him to get down and dirty. Children who have early hands-on experiences learn to take risks and investigate new situations. They develop the ability to take initiative.

**Show your child she is capable.** Appreciate your child's strengths. Allow your baby rely on her abilities to soothe herself, put herself to sleep, feed herself, and learn to interact with others. When your child feels capable, she can feel confident about her abilities to cope with life.



**Accept your child's feelings.** In the first several years of life, babies learn to show a range of emotions. Some are hard for parents to deal with. But resilient children are able to meet adversity and still express a variety of feelings appropriately. They do not withdraw, or stay upset and angry. Letting your baby know you accept his feelings makes it possible for him to use them to be resilient.

**Help your baby form relationships.** Support your child as she learns about other people. Play with her, and spend time developing your relationship with her. Allow her to be held and cared for by other responsible adults. As she grows, provide opportunities to observe and play with other children. Be a secure base she can return to. Resilient individuals rely on healthy relationships to provide support and relieve stress. ❖