

## **Developing Resilient Children**

Resilience is a crucial aspect of Positive Education and something our students are regularly learning about. The following article is by Dr. Karen Reivich, an expert in the field. The points she makes are important for us to remember and reinforce in our lives as adults as well as in our roles as parents/educators.

### **Resilience: Ingredient List** *(Article by Dr. Karen Reivich)*

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from setbacks, to learn from failure, to be motivated by challenges and to believe in your own abilities to deal with the stress and difficulties in life. What you might not know is that resilience can be learned. Children can learn-from their parents, teachers, and coaches-how to develop resilience skills.

Research has identified many important ingredients of resilience, but there are seven that we can most easily teach our children.

1. **Emotion Awareness and Control:** Resilient people are comfortable with their feelings and with expressing them. In fact, resilient children experience a broad array of emotions and feel comfortable talking about what they are feeling with people they trust.
2. **Impulse Control:** Resilience doesn't require that you stop having impulses, but it does require you to stop yourself from acting on every impulse you have.
3. **Realistic Optimism:** Realistic optimism keeps you shooting for the stars without losing sight of the ground below. Resilience is not served by denying problems when they exist, but by viewing situations as optimistically as possible within the bounds of reality.
4. **Flexible Thinking:** Flexible thinking increases the likelihood that you'll be able to come up with solutions to the problem you're confronting.
5. **Self-Efficacy:** Resilient children believe that they are effective in the world. They have learned what their strengths and weaknesses are, and they rely on their strengths to navigate the challenges in life.
6. **Empathy:** Empathy serves resilience by facilitating strong relationships. Children who care about others are more likely to have strong, healthy relationships.
7. **Reaching Out:** Children who are resilient don't see failure as something to be avoided. Their optimism and self-efficacy give them the confidence to try, even when that means risking failure.

No matter how resilient your child is today, you can help them to become more resilient tomorrow. Resilience is not all or nothing—you can be a little resilient, a lot resilient; resilient in some situations but not others. We can all become more resilient tomorrow than we are today. In order for children to reach their fullest potential and thrive no matter what life puts in their path, they need to know how to approach life with resilience.