

HeadStart Parent Support



HeadStart Kent is part of Kent County Council's Early Help and Preventative Services. HeadStart's goal is to help young people develop their resilience so that they can cope better when faced with difficult circumstances. Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, HeadStart makes positive change to young people's lives by working with young people directly but also schools, families and communities

Building resilience as a child or teenager can help your child have better coping skills when facing difficult or stressful situations and challenges. It will help them to understand their emotions and how to act upon them responsibly. Resilience builds their sense of self-worth and gives them confidence to overcome obstacles, helping them to cope with difficult situations in the future such as at university, in the workplace or during relationships.

There are many ways for you to support your child to become more resilient.

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Encourage healthy risk taking: Allowing your child to step out of their comfort zone can make them more resilient as it helps young people to learn how to deal with and adapt to new, unfamiliar situations. Encouraging your child to join a new sports team, try a different after school club or to socialise with children outside of their friendship circle, are all ways of promoting healthy risk taking.

Talk about emotions: Your child needs to learn how to identify and deal with different emotions to build resilience. Talking openly about different emotions that you or your child might be feeling can help your child to understand what they are experiencing. It can help them to learn that it is normal to feel a range of different emotions. Labelling the emotions by saying “it’s okay to feel anxious, sad or angry”, can help children to recognise that they are not alone in the situations they are experiencing.

Allow your child to solve problems independently: A parent’s natural instinct can be to protect their child from dealing with problems so that they don’t feel any awkwardness or distress. By allowing children to make their own decisions, even if it causes discomfort, can help them to grow and become more resilient. This may include supporting your child to develop their own friendship groups; sometimes taking a step back allows your child to stand on their own two feet.

Embrace mistakes: Everybody makes mistakes and children are no different. It’s important that your child knows that it is okay to make mistakes as long as they can learn and grow from them in the long run. In fact, children who focus on avoiding mistakes may be more likely to be anxious. Parents owning their own choices and mistakes can enable their children to learn and grow, building resilience.

Healthy living: Your child’s health is always going to be one of the most important things to you. It’s important that children develop healthy lifestyles and strategies that can help them as they grow older. This means encouraging your child to eat healthily, drink enough water, and making sure that they get enough sleep so that they can reach their full potential.

Create a safe space: The world can seem like a battlefield when you are a child or teenager, especially at school. That’s why it is important children can come home to a place where they feel safe and accepted. Making your home into a space where your child can openly talk to you about what is worrying them, whether it is friendship issues, school worries, or self-image problems, is important to help them to develop healthy coping strategies on their road to resilience.

Empower your child to help others: Teaching your child to help others is a great thing to do from an early age. This can be simple things such as engaging them in tasks around the house or it could be encouraging your child to do age-appropriate voluntary work. Helping others can give a child a sense of belonging and purpose which helps them become more resilient in the long run.

Do you have a resilience story to tell?

Perhaps you helped your child through a difficult circumstance or developed resilience yourself at a young age. Get in touch to share your experience by emailing info@drawyourownsolution.com.

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