

## Building Resilience: You might be doing more than you think!



*"You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own, and you know what you know, and YOU are the one who'll decide where to go... You'll be on your way up! You'll be seeing great sights! You'll join the highfliers who soar to high heights."*

- Dr. Seuss

Resilience is the ability to grow and learn from overwhelming, challenging situations. This ability is not something you either have or you don't, it's learned through our experiences and those around us.

The path to creating "highfliers" and planning for the future is by getting through one moment, one hour, one day at a time. What a relief! The Protective Factors, also known as the Five Strengths, offer a realistic way of developing the ability to be resilient.

- 1 Knowing how to find help:** Advocating for yourself and your family builds self-confidence and perseverance in you and your child. (This includes accepting help when it is offered!) Saying something like "I don't know, let's find out!" and showing your child or teen how to find help, sets them up for being a highflier.
- 2 Helping kids understand feelings:** For kids, teens, and adults, emotions can be overwhelming and seem like they come from nowhere! When you say something like "You are mad and sad because your sister just took your favorite toy from you. Let's see what we can do to get it back," or "you are devastated because he just broke up with you," and you simply sit with your teen until they are done crying, you're building a highflier.
- 3 Connecting with others:** Safe, nurturing friendships/connections provide support, help problem-solve, and create opportunities to show kindness. Setting up a play date, taking your teen to hang out with their friends, or helping the neighbor weed their garden help to create your highflier.
- 4 Parenting as children grow:** Parenting a teen is definitely not the same as parenting a newborn! Knowing your child's developmental needs makes parenting a little easier. When you smiled back at your baby smiling at you, provided your toddler a choice of toys to play with, or allowed your teen to safely hang out with their friends unsupervised, you were building a highflier.
- 5 Building Inner Strength:** Parent guilt- the weight of blaming yourself for every bad thing that happens- is real, but the concept is not true. Parents can't possibly be to blame for *everything*. When you remain strong, flexible, and are kind and forgiving to *yourself*, you're building a highflier.

Parenting is messy, frustrating, terrifying, joyful, exhausting, and amazing all at once. I once asked a group of parents, 'how many of you are experiencing parenthood exactly as you imagined or hoped it would go *before* your first child was born?' *Everyone* laughed, and no one raised their hand!

You are not alone! To hear from other parents and learn more about the Five Strengths/ Protective Factors, visit the [Five for Families website](#).