

RESILIENT KIDS

NEWSLETTER by Michael Grose - Australia's leading parenting educator

When life doesn't go their way!

One of the keys to functioning socially and emotionally is the ability to deal with disappointment and rejection.

Most children experience some type of rejection from their peers throughout childhood. One study found that even popular children were rejected about one quarter of the time when they approached children in school.

Most children recover from such rejection. They move on and form constructive, worthwhile relationships but some children need help. They often take rejection personally and blame themselves. As a parent it is useful to challenge children's unhelpful thinking and encourage them to look for new friendship opportunities. Parents can help children understand that rejection may happen for any number of reasons that are unrelated to them.

In the course of a school day children will meet with a number of challenges and even setbacks. They may struggle with some schoolwork. They may not do well in a test and they may not be picked for a game that they wanted to play. Children grow stronger when they overcome their difficulties. The challenge for parents is to build and maintain children's confidence to help them get through the rough times.

One way to help children deal with rejection and disappointment is to talk through a problem or difficulty recognising and accepting their feelings. Talk about various scenarios around the incident,



discussing possible outcomes. The age of the child will determine the amount of detail. Keep things simple and avoid burdening a younger child with concepts he or she doesn't understand.

Your attitude can make a huge difference to how a child reacts. If you see rejection or disappointments as problems then your child will be hamstrung by this view. See them as challenges then your child will, in all likelihood, pick up your upbeat view and deal with disappointments easily. After all, confidence is catching!



TRY THIS...

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

To help children handle rejection and disappointment try the following four strategies:

1. **Model** optimism. Watch how you present the world to children, as they will pick up your view.
2. **Tell** children how you handle disappointment and rejection. Not only is it reassuring for children to know that their parents understand how they feel but they can learn a great deal by how their parents handle situations.
3. **Help** children recognise times in the past when they bounced back from disappointment. Help them recognise those same strategies can be used again.
4. **Laugh** together. Humour is a great coping mechanism. It helps put disappointment in perspective. It helps them understand that things will get better. They always do.

ACTION PLAN

First Step . . .

Next Step . . .

For more ideas about promoting resilience in children visit www.parentingideas.com.au

QUOTE

"Fall seven times, stand up eight."
JAPANESE PROVERB

WHAT'S YOUR CHILD LIKE?

DOES YOUR CHILD BEHAVE LIKE A GOOD FRIEND?

DOES HE

1. Bounce back when things go wrong?
Yes [2] No [0]
2. Rationalise disappointment and rejection rather than take it personally?
Yes [2] No [0]
3. Take a positive view when challenges come his way?
Yes [2] No [0]
4. Pat himself on the back when he does

something well? Yes [2] No [0]

5. Let little things spill over and spoil other parts of his life.
Yes [0] No [2]

SCORE:

- 10:** A resilient child. He bounces back up when things don't go his way.
6-8: A hardy soul.
0-4: Probably too hard on himself. Needs some help to lighten the load.