



## 14 Ways to Raise Resilient Children

Positive self-esteem will result when a child experiences success and feels competent, because confidence will naturally grow. Some identify this as “resilience.” Alexandra Delis-Abrams, Ph.D. says, “A resilient child becomes an adaptable, happy adult. Resiliency is all about how we weather the storms of life, adapt to change, flex and bounce back after a fall, and cope with fluctuations in the journey of life.”

Here are fourteen ways you make your children resilient:

1. Accept and love them unconditionally. Teach them that God accepts and loves them unconditionally, but expects them to do their best. *“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God”* (Romans 15:7).
2. Discipline your child in a way that works best for that child and circumstance. *“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it”* (Proverbs 22:6). “The way a child should go” is also translated “according to his bent.”
3. Develop gifts and talents. Each child is born with unique abilities, a personality, strengths and weaknesses. Help your child identify abilities, maximize them, and feel pride about them. Help your child also identify and deal with weaknesses. Help your child accept himself while continuing to strive to do better. *“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well”* (Psalm 139:14).
4. Give your child control over as much as possible while providing limits. There is a direct correlation between having choices, learning from successes and failures, and gaining self-confidence. If you make all the choices for your child either through over-protection or demanding control, he/she will not experience the sense of power that is felt through his/her own choices. Use logical consequences to discipline. Let your child choose so he/she understands cause and effect, responsibility, and that choices have consequences. *“All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty”* (Proverbs 14:23).
5. Praise your child realistically. Don’t pretend your child does well at something that isn’t done well. The world is cruel and brutally honest. Help your child to accept his/her own limitations. Praise your child for successes, whatever they are, and encourage your child to feel good about them. Expect your child to do his/her very best and communicate that expectation. *“A truthful witness does not deceive, but a false witness pours out lies”* (Proverbs 14:5).
6. Make sure your child knows that he/she is an integral and needed family member (belonging). Give chores, responsibilities, and provide interaction. Provide a family identity

and a positive family environment. *“So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it”* (1 Corinthians 12:25-27). Each of us is an important part of the body of Christ no matter how small or large a part we play. Everyone’s needs are important and each one should care equally for each other. The family should function in the same way.

7. Teach your child that he/she deserves to be respected and treated well by others. Provide guidance on how to deal with those that mistreat your child and give your child specific tools to stand up to peer pressure and teasing. *“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple”* (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

8. Teach problem-solving skills. Competent and confident children can deal with life because they know how to problem solve. Teach these skills by allowing your child to face problems with guidance and training from you without fixing things for them. Ask questions like: *“What did you do right?” “Why do you think it worked/didn’t work?” “What do you think you could have done differently?” “What are some things you can do?” “What is good and bad about each of those things?”* Teach your child to set goals and to break down the goals into workable sub-goals. Teach necessary life skills. Young adults today are generally not competent in their life skills. *“A prudent man gives thoughts to his steps”* (Proverbs 14:15).

9. Teach your children to identify, accept, and handle their emotions in ways that are healthy. We need to identify our emotions because they teach us about ourselves. We don’t need to label them as good or bad; we need to recognize that it is how we act on them that makes them good or bad. God made us to feel the same emotions he feels. *“God made us in his image”* (Genesis 1:26).

10. Don’t exasperate them by uncontrolled anger, putting your needs onto them, expecting too much for their ability or age, giving constant criticism, or disciplining too harshly. *“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord”* (Ephesians 6:4).

11. Don’t compare, label, or shame. All of these discourage and tear down your children. *“Encourage one another and build each other up”* (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

12. Make them work for what they get. This generation tends to be spoiled, entitled, and lazy. *“If a man will not work, he shall not eat”* (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

13. Teach by example. Model spirituality, forgiveness, grace vs. perfectionism, self-respect, setting and working toward goals, self-acceptance, and the opposite of materialism. *“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you”* (John 13:15).

14. Address problem areas: physical, emotional, academic, relational, and behavioral. These things will make it more difficult for your child to feel competent and if you don’t help them in these areas, you will make it worse for them. *“Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy”* (Psalm 82:3-4).