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CHARACTERISTICS OF RESILIENT CHILDREN

Being resilient does not mean that children won't experience frustration, loss or stress; however, it does enable them to cope better and bounce back faster from life's challenges. According to the study *Fostering Resiliency in Kids* by Bonnie Bernard, resilient children have the following attributes in common:

They are typically optimistic in the way they view the future, the world and their place in it.

- **Social competence** – Resilient children are able to easily interact and engage with others. They are socially and physically active, alert and flexible (even in infancy!) and they adapt well to change. Often, resilient children have a great sense of humor and can laugh at life's situations and at themselves.
- **Problem-solving skills** – Resilient children are able to think through challenging situations and focus on finding a solution. They are often uniquely resourceful and creative thinkers.
- **Autonomy** – Resilient children have a strong sense of who they are; they are often very independent and feel in control over their day-to-day life and environments.
- **Sense of purpose and future** – Resilient children have the ability to plan and set goals. They are typically optimistic in the way they view the future, the world and their place in it.

The organization **Personality and Kids** offers a quick and easy Personality Questionnaire for parents to complete about (or with) their children. While similar to the adult Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test, the Personality Questionnaire is free, and parents can click to get initial results and an explanation of those results right away (also at no charge). Designed to provide information about children ages 7 to 12, the test may help parents identify their child's strengths and positive characteristics, as well as areas to work on. Visit www.personalitypage.com/cgi-local/build_pqk.cgi

- Encourage your child to keep a journal. Journaling helps teens and pre-teens get their thoughts out of their head (where they can cause anxiety) and onto the page where they can read them more objectively. When kids review their journals, it helps them see how far they've come over time, and it documents how they overcame difficult situations.

PARENTS: RESILIENCY SKILLS START WITH YOU

As a parent, you can help build resiliency skills in your children by working on your *own* resilience. The Nemours Foundation suggests developing the following attitudes and behaviors:

- Start thinking of change as challenging, not as problematic.
- Consider problems as temporary and think of them as opportunities for finding solutions, not barriers that stop all progress.
- Learn how to set achievable goals and work toward them with optimism and persistence – believing in your future success.
- Solve issues as they come up, when they are manageable. Don't let small problems grow into bigger ones.
- Seek to improve relationships with family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors.
- Keep your commitments and know your limits. Don't over schedule yourself or your kids.
- Take time to relax; find new ways for you and your family to enjoy downtime

Overcoming adversity in a way that helps us continually build our resilience requires a series of steps:

1. Identify the problem or obstacle
2. Focus on and prepare a solution
3. Face the challenge
4. Acknowledge your process and/or achievement

These steps allow parents to practice resiliency skills; we can then teach our children how to be resilient while modeling behaviors that they can use in their own lives.