

*Against All Odds*

Exploring and Supporting  
the Resilient Child

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What is Resiliency?



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The capacity to  
spring back,  
**rebound**,  
successfully adapt  
in the face of adversity,  
and develop social competence  
**despite** exposure to stress.



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“Spite everything, I believe that people are really good at heart” *Anne Frank*

“I now know that experience comes to us for a purpose, and if we follow the guidance of the spirit within us, we will probably find that the purpose is a good one.” *Ruby Bridges*

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**Emmy Werner**  
“Mother Resiliency”

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Resilient children possess the following traits...

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## Autonomy

- ✦ Positive self-esteem
- ✦ Self-discipline
- ✦ Resistance to negative messages
- ✦ Ability to separate



Werner, E.E. & Smith, R.S. (2001). *Journeys from childhood to midlife: Risk, resilience, and recovery*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

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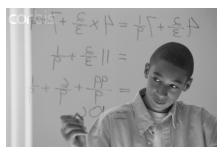
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## Problem Solving Skills

- ✦ Resourcefulness
- ✦ Initiative
- ✦ Planning skills
- ✦ Generates alternatives
- ✦ Uses imagination



Werner, E.E. & Smith, R.S. (2001). *Journeys from childhood to midlife: Risk, resilience, and recovery*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

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## Social Competence

- ✦ Flexible
- ✦ Sensitive to others
- ✦ Effective communication skills
- ✦ Sense of humor
- ✦ Tolerance of others



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## A Sense of Purpose and Future



- Goal oriented
- Hopefulness
- Looks forward to the future
- Persistent
- Educational aspirations
- Faith/spirituality

Werner, E.E. & Smith, R.S. (2001). *Journeys from childhood to midlife: Risk, resilience, and recovery*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

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## Protective Factors



**Caring and Support**



**High Expectations**



**Active Participation**



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## The Resilient Child



**Works Well**



**Plays Well**



**Loves Well**

**Expects Well**



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*Lost Childhood*

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**Those of us who take care for young children, who work with or on behalf of them, can help tilt the balance from vulnerability to resiliency by:**

- ☉ Accept children's temperamental idiosyncrasies and allow them some experiences that challenge, but do not overwhelm their coping abilities;
- ☉ Convey to children a sense of responsibility and caring and, in turn, reward them for helpfulness and cooperation;

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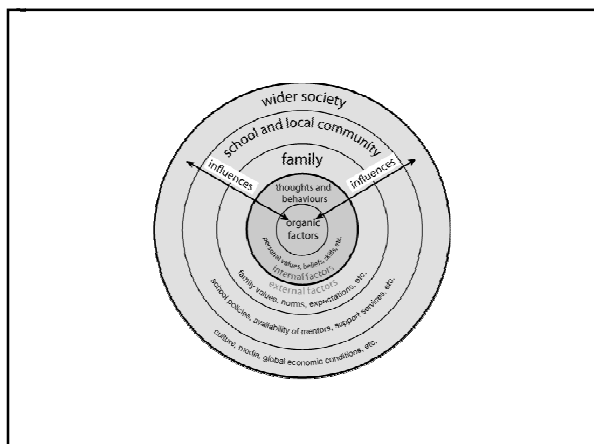
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- ☑ Encourage a child to develop a special interest, hobby, or activity that can serve as a source of gratification and self-esteem;
- ☑ Model, by example, a conviction that life makes sense despite the inevitable adversities that each of us encounters;
- ☑ Encourage children to reach out beyond their nuclear family to a beloved relative or friend.



Werner, E.E. (1986). Resilient offspring of alcoholics: A longitudinal study from birth to age 18. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 47, 34-40.

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### Activities that Foster Resilience

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### Working with Families

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Specific opportunities for DEC professionals  
to foster resilience

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Evaluating Personal Resiliency

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“Never doubt that  
a small group of  
thoughtful,  
committed  
citizens can  
change the world.  
Indeed, it is the  
only thing that  
ever has.”



Margaret Mead

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