



Simply Child's Play: Fostering Resilience Thru Joyful Play

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Welcome & Introductions

Presenters:

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Who is in the room?

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Think of a favorite play memory from your childhood. Pair up with the person sitting next to you and share what makes it such a special memory.

Our Time Together

- ▶ Defining resilience and play
- ▶ Why build resilience?
- ▶ What are the elements we are fostering?
- ▶ Why play to build resilience?
- ▶ How to Incorporate Resilience-Building Play
- ▶ Types of Play and Their Resilience Benefits
- ▶ Let's Play! (Hands-on activity)
- ▶ Wrap up and Questions

Defining Resilience and Play

- ▶ Resilience is a multidimensional concept that refers to an individual's ability to adapt, bounce back, or recover from adversity, trauma, stress, or significant life challenges. It involves the capacity to maintain or regain psychological and emotional well-being, despite facing difficult circumstances or setbacks. Resilience is not a fixed trait but rather a dynamic process influenced by a combination of genetic, environmental, and personal factors.
- ▶ Early childhood play can be defined as a spontaneous and voluntary activity engaged in by young children for enjoyment, exploration, and learning. It often involves imaginative and creative elements and can occur through various activities, such as pretend play, constructive play, and interactive play with peers or adults. Early childhood play serves as a crucial avenue for cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development in young children.

Why foster resilience in young children?

Resilience in early childhood is of paramount importance as it lays the foundation for a child's long-term emotional, social, and psychological well-being. Building resilience as young children grow and learn can positively impact:

- Emotional and Mental Health
- Adaptation to Adversity
- Academic Success
- Social Competence
- Reduced Risky Behavior
- Long-term, Over-all, Well-being

What skills are we fostering to support children in becoming resilient?

First and Foremost:

Strong Social Connections: Having supportive relationships with family members, friends, and a broader social network is crucial for resilience. Social connections provide emotional support, encouragement, and a sense of belonging. They also offer a safety net during difficult times.

"Every child deserves a champion; an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best they can possibly be." -- Rita Pierson

Additionally.....

- ▶ Emotional regulation
- ▶ Positive self-identity
- ▶ Adaptive coping strategies
- ▶ Optimism/Positive Outlook
- ▶ Flexibility/Adaptability
- ▶ Sense of purpose and meaning
- ▶ Problem-solving
- ▶ Cognitive flexibility/Ability to reframe
- ▶ Sense of control

A Word About~

Physical Health and Well-Being:

Physical health is interconnected with mental and emotional well-being. Proper nutrition, exercise, and rest are important elements in building resilience.

Access to Services: Having access to resources, such as healthcare, education, and community services, can bolster resilience. These resources provide practical assistance and opportunities for personal growth.

Why play?

- Play is a child's natural way of learning and exploring the world.
- Children develop, learn and grow through play.
- Play provides a safe space to experience and overcome challenges.
- Play is joyful!

How to Incorporate Resilience-Building Play

- Create a safe, supportive environment where children can explore and learn.
- Create a play-rich environment: Offer a variety of developmentally appropriate and engaging materials.
- Encourage unstructured playtime: Allow children to explore and make choices.
- Facilitate cooperative play: Promote sharing and teamwork.
- Provide opportunities for outdoor play: Let children take calculated risks.

Tips for Families:

- Play alongside your child: Be present and engage in their play.
- Foster independence: Allow children to make decisions and solve problems.
- Create a supportive environment: Encourage open communication.
- Balance structure and free play: Offer a mix of guided and unstructured activities.
- Be a role model: Demonstrate resilience in your own life.

Some types of play and their resilience benefits!

- ▶ Physical Play: Builds physical strength and coordination.
 - ▶ Imaginative Play: Encourages creativity and problem-solving.
 - ▶ Social Play: Fosters cooperation and communication skills.
 - ▶ Outdoor Play: Promotes risk-taking and self-confidence.
 - ▶ Constructive Play: Enhances planning and organization skills.
- ▶ Note: Add picture of children at play

Concrete Example: Sensory Play

Sensory play can be effective in building resilience in young children. Sensory play involves activities that stimulate one or more of the five senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. These activities encourage children to explore and interact with their environment.

Sensory Play Supports the Development of:

- ✓ Emotional Regulation
- ✓ Problem-Solving Skills
- ✓ Resilience to Stress
- ✓ Focus/Concentration
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Social Skills
- ✓ Adaptability
- ✓ Self-Esteem/Confidence
- ✓ Sensory Processing Skills
- ✓ Tolerance to Uncertainty

Loose Parts Play

Loose parts play involves open-ended materials and objects that children can manipulate, combine, and explore in creative ways. These loose parts can be anything from sticks and stones to cardboard boxes and fabric scraps. Engaging in loose parts play contributes to the development of resilience in young children in several ways:

How might engaging in loose parts play contribute to the development of resilience in young children?

Let's Play!

- ▶ Engage with the play invitations and materials.
- ▶ As a small group discuss how this play experience might support the building of resilience in young children. Have a scribe record your thoughts.
- ▶ Generate ideas for how a low resourced program or family might be able to create a similar experience using materials readily available.
- ▶ Choose a group member to report out.

Share back!

Wrap Up Comments and Questions

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