



5 Ways to “Stress-Proof” Your Kids

Coping with stress is an important life skill. These simple techniques will help build your child’s stress resilience, which is the ability to bounce back from adversity and grow from the challenge. They are useful for adults too!

1. **Center Yourself** – Children will learn how to react to stressful events by watching you. Set a good example by remaining calm and your peaceful presence will have positive effects for both of you.
2. **Soothe and Support** – Reassuring words and hugs go a long way in making a child feel safe and secure. Children will also adopt your soothing words and caring style to comfort themselves.
3. **Listen and Reflect** – Invite children to talk about what has happened, then listen without judgment or interruption. Reflect back what you hear them say, for instance: “It sounds like that was really scary for you.”
4. **Move the Mood** – Painful experiences are often difficult for young children to verbalize. Encourage different ways of expressing thoughts and feelings, such as drawing, singing, dancing, play-acting or story-telling. Exuberant play is especially effective.
5. **Smile & Shine** – To instill “good” feelings again, ask the child to imagine herself as a big sunflower with her face turned toward the sun. Tell her to “let the warmth of the sunshine feel so good that it puts a smile on your face and a smile in your heart.” Let her know that she can “smile and shine” her good feelings out for other people to share too.

The Inspire Children Foundation is a nonprofit organization committed to preventing and resolving the harmful effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress. Visit us at www.InspireChildren.org.

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