

Supporting wellbeing and resilience

ECE resources

Addressing children's wellbeing will be an important part of supporting children's learning at home, as emotions have a significant influence on cognitive processes and learning.

The most important influence on a child's mental and emotional wellbeing is their responsive, consistent and stable relationship with their parent or caregiver, so take time to focus on relationship-building.

Children's wellbeing is enhanced when you:

- **Listen attentively** and appreciatively to children's communications.
- Are emotionally available and **respond to children's emotional cues** and perspectives.
- Provide lots of **positive attention, warmth, praise and encouragement**. Smile, use affectionate words, and engage in brief tickles, pats on the back, special handshakes, and cuddles on your lap.
- Try to **develop and maintain clear and calm routines** with explanations about how these keep everyone safe and activities running smoothly.
- **Focus on enjoying time together**, finding time each day to do favourite activities such as making popcorn and watching movies, having a picnic in the lounge, building forts or dancing.

Developing resilience means that children are able to understand their feelings and put them into words, to talk about things that are frightening or distressing, and to adapt well to adversity or stress. This involves a range of critical abilities such as regulating and expressing emotion appropriately, controlling impulses, analysing problems and developing a positive outlook on their own ability to solve problems and handle stress. You can help children to build resilience by:

- **Helping children to organise their feelings** by accepting, naming and discussing their feelings. Accept and affirm all emotions as natural rather than seeking to change them.
- **Promptly reassuring, comforting and supporting** children in a calm and considered way when they are experiencing heightened emotion. Use your tone of voice, gesture and facial expression to empathise with children and slowly adjust to guide them back into a calm, regulated state.
- Modelling and teaching **calming and focusing** strategies, such as taking deep breaths.
- Offering opportunities for well-developed **make-believe play**. Play helps children develop self-control and flexibility of thinking that help them to cope with difficult situations.
- **Demonstrating positivity** by guiding children to identify the positive parts of a situation and verbalising positive thoughts.
- **Maintaining your own emotional wellbeing**. Be aware of your triggers for negative emotions, and develop strategies for dealing with emotions and preventing emotional exhaustion, such as asking for and accepting support.

Wellbeing, resilience and cognitive learning are greatly enhanced when children experience feelings of confidence. This is why it is important to:

- Identify ideas and topics that your child is **interested in learning** about.

- Develop a range of **interesting materials and activities** (see here for The Education Hub's weekly activity suggestions) that engage children and enable you to have relaxed and playful interactions with them. Children are more likely to be engaged, cooperative and demonstrate positive behaviours when they are involved with the people and activities that they enjoy.
- Offer opportunities for children to **make choices about their play and learning**
- Help children to feel competent by allowing them to **take measured risks**, and identifying and reinforcing their competence by highlighting small accomplishments ('You remembered to put your plate in the dishwasher').

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