

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Guide for Professionals: Resiliency

Here's what we know about resiliency:

- It is the ability to steer through life's challenges and bounce back from adversity in a positive way.
- Helps people deal with stress, overcome childhood disadvantages and reach out to new opportunities.
- It is not a personality trait and develops throughout your life.
 - Develops through the interaction of supportive relationships, biological systems and gene expression.
- Research demonstrates that it can be linked to higher levels of happiness, positive relationships and greater success in school, work and life.

Within your professional role and considering the social determinants of health, how do you:

- Share strategies with parents? Examples:
 - Calming strategies such as deep breathing, hugs, movement, a drink of water, music, art, taking a break, sensory play, etc.
 - Modeling and nurturing the development of positive thinking habits and reaching out for support as needed.
 - Encouraging children to keep trying even when it is hard. Helping them learn that mistakes are okay.
 - Giving children opportunities to help out and contribute to the needs of others through meaningful tasks such as: getting a band aide for a friend, help cleaning up, help with mealtime preparation.
- Discuss how the parent or caregiver is coping and their support system.
- Explore opportunities for connecting to informal and formal supports (community, neighbourhood, resources, groups).
- Support the parent or caregiver to have realistic, age appropriate expectations for their child.
- Administer an appropriate screening tool to ensure that the child is meeting their expected developmental milestones and refer if applicable.

Where can you find more information:

- Parenting in Ottawa
- Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development: Resilience
- Reaching IN ... Reaching OUT: Road to Resiliency Factsheet and Video
- Harvard University, Center on the Developing Child, Harvard: 8 Things to Remember about Child Development
- Best Start: Building Resilience in Young Children
- CHEO: MindMasters 2
- Public Health Agency of Canada: Social Determinants of Health
- Parent Resource Centre
- 211 Ontario

References

- Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development: Resiliency
- Reaching IN ... Reaching OUT Resiliency Guidebook
- Harvard University, Center on the Developing Child: Key Concepts, Brain Architecture
- Harvard University, Center on the Developing Child: The Science of Resilience
- Harvard University, Center on the Developing Child, Harvard: 8 Things to Remember about Child Development
- Best Start, Building Resilience in Young Children