



Building emotionally resilient behaviour

There are many ways we can help our child build emotional resilience. One very powerful way is to give behaviour specific feedback to your child when you see them behaving or thinking in a resilient manner. Children love to hear specifically what they are doing that is on the right track rather than just hearing generalisations such as 'well done' or 'you did well'. Here are some examples of giving specific feedback for emotionally resilient behaviours:

Ways to praise your child for emotionally resilient behavior:

- "I can see that even though you are a bit nervous, you are going to try to do it anyway"
- "Even though you are finding this hard, you are not getting too sad about it"
- "I can see you are choosing not to get into a fight"
- "Good for you, you didn't let yourself get too angry"
- "You've learned how not to get too worried"
- "You see, you can get through something that seems scary"
- "Even though you didn't know how to play the new game, you didn't worry and you kept on trying"

Give lots of BSF (Behaviour Specific Feedback)

Behaviour – the behaviour they are doing that shows resilience and confidence.

Specific – be very specific e.g. "I like the way you went up and spoke to that girl you did not know – that was really confident!"

Feedback – Verbally praise when you see it. You are giving feedback as a "resilience" coach and children need guidance and positive praise when they are on the right path!

Subtle ways of giving feedback

Children need a lot of guidance around all sorts of behaviour and this needs to be constant and consistent. Children look to adults to get feedback on their behaviour even though they may not be aware of this. The feedback they get from you is one of the most powerful ways we can encourage resilient responses to setbacks. Our feedback can be very specific as explained above, but it can also be subtle and just as powerful. If we respond in a very anxious way to small setbacks our children are having the message is clear to children: I need to be anxious about this as well – if mum or dad is worried about this, then I need to be as well. The messages we give our children through our own emotional reactions teach children how to cope with life's difficulties and they often learn how handle difficulties by observing our own behaviour.