

Tips for Building Your Protective Factors



KENTUCKY
STRENGTHENING
FAMILIESSM

1

PARENTAL RESILIENCE

2

SOCIAL CONNECTION

3

**KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD
DEVELOPMENT**

4

**CONCRETE SUPPORT IN
TIMES OF NEED**

5

**SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL
COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN**

6

NURTURING & ATTACHMENT



BOUNCING BACK!

Parental Resilience

How to prepare for the unexpected!

Parenthood can be overwhelming. Here are some ways to handle challenges and bounce back from tough times.

- Keep a positive and hopeful attitude
- Solve problems creatively, explore all possibilities.
- Seek support and help from others.
- Use past experiences as a guide
- Rise to challenges with a conquering attitude
- Fall back on the things and people that help you cope.

TIPS TO TRY:

1

VALUE YOUR EXPERIENCE AND YOUR WISDOM

We can learn from our past experiences, to positively respond to a challenging situation today.

2

GET AND GIVE HELP

Be courageous! Ask for help. Knowing what you need will bring relief. You can help others with your new knowledge.

3

BRAINSTORM FOR POSSIBILITIES

Find solutions by talking with others about your options and responses.

4

BELIEVE IT

During tough times it is hard to believe you will make it through it. Practice saying: "I can make it happen", or "Things are better, starting today".

5

MAKE A PLAN AND FOLLOW THROUGH

Plan for what is best for you and your family. What are the steps, and support you need to put your plan into action? Stay the course during challenges that may arise.

6

RESPOND DON'T REACT

Take time to make decisions that supports your needs. Make priorities for yourself and family. Choose the best options, before acting.



OPENING UP YOUR CIRCLE!

Social Connection

Parents need friends too!

Parents often put the needs of their children first- and forget the importance of having their own group of friends. Trusted friends can help you to:

- Brainstorm and solve problems
- Share advice and stories about the joys and challenges of raising children
- Give and receive back up child care
- Meet last-minute needs and give relief in stressful times
- Share community information and connections

TIPS TO TRY:

1

REACH OUT TO PARENTS WHO SEEM ALONE OR ISOLATED

A friendly wave, a smile, or a nod is a way to start- but why not take it a step further and introduce yourself to a neighbor who seems alone? This will help you to build new connection and possibly help out a parent in need.

2

LOOK FOR PARENTS WHO SHARE YOUR INTERESTS

Find parents who have children the same age as yours or whose children are involved in the same activities. These parents will have similar stories, needs, and challenges. You may find a great source of mutual support!

3

ATTEND COMMUNITY OR CHURCH EVENTS

Open up your circle by exploring events or activities within your community. Becoming involved in your community will give you a sense of belonging to something bigger!

4

INVITE A NEW PARENT TO JOIN YOUR SOCIAL GROUP

Being the "new kid on the block" does not get any easier as an adult. Be aware of new neighbors, new parents in your school and at your church. Extend a hand of friendship and open up your circle as a source of support.

5

TAKE TIME TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH FRIENDS

Make it a priority to stay in contact with your friends. Schedule time each week to take a walk with a friend or share a cup of coffee. Meet a friend at the park and take time to talk while the children play.

6

SHARE THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF PARENTING

Parents are the best experts when it comes to their children. Take time to share your wisdom and seek input and support from others. Not only can you relieve your stress by venting your frustrations, but you can also build your confidence by acknowledging when things have gone right.



PARENTS AREN'T BORN WITH ALL THE ANSWERS!

Knowledge of Child Development

There is no "one size fits all" when it comes to raising children. Every child is different and understanding child development can help limit frustrations.

- Having realistic expectations of what your children can and cannot do at certain ages.
- Recognize when children's behaviors are "typical" for their age- or a cause for concern.
- Choosing a response that matches the unique needs of your children. What "worked" at age 2 may not "work" at age 5.
- Dealing positively with your children during each stage of their development.

TIPS TO TRY:

1

BUILD YOUR PARENT BRAIN

Ask questions to your pediatrician, neighbor or your child's teacher. If you aren't sure about something remember there are lots of people in the community who want to help!

2

SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Make big goals (like tying shoes or potty training) reachable by creating small steps toward the goal. Little victories will build confidence to help achieve bigger goals.

3

CONNECT THROUGH CONVERSATION

When setting limits it is important to talk through the many ways we can handle frustrating situations. Talk about rules and expectations so they know what to expect if they don't meet them.

4

LEARN AS YOU GO

Be flexible. If something doesn't work try a new strategy and share it with your child.

5

TALK, TALK, TALK AND LISTEN

Babies learn from the moment they come into the world! Talking, reading books and asking questions will help build their vocabulary and prepare them for school.



WE ALL NEED SUPPORT!

Concrete Support in Times of Need

Raising children brings so much joy yet so many challenges too! Remember we are all in this together and there are many people and organizations there to help.

- Learn about organizations, activities and community resources.
- Build connections with other parents while sharing and learning about ways to "parent".
- Reach out to others when feeling overwhelmed and alone.
- Think ahead! Create a backup plan to deal with the unexpected.
- Be available to offer emotional support or ideas to other families

TIPS TO TRY:

1

TALK TO A TRUSTED RESOURCE

There are many local resources and asking your local librarian, hospital, or local agency can help direct you to what is available in your community

2

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Give yourself a break! Parenting is tough work and it is necessary to unplug and relax. Eat healthy and get enough sleep. Remind yourself daily of what you are grateful for.

3

FIND A SUPPORT GROUP OR PARENT CAFÉ

Just talking about the challenges of parenting can help reduce stress. Ask your child's teacher or the librarian about what groups are in your community for parents.



YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S FIRST- AND BEST TEACHER!

Social & Emotional Competence of Children

Just as children's brains and bodies develop, so do their emotions and their ability to express themselves. Parents play an important role in helping their children learn to express and handle their emotions. Children's feelings are often connected to their actions. Children who develop social and emotional skills are able to:

- Tell you about their feelings.
- Identify different feelings (mad, sad, glad, etc.)
- Handle small issues in ways that do not lead to temper tantrums.
- Express feeling without causing harm to themselves or others.
- Attach to other adults and separate from parents without signs of distress.
- Focus on tasks and activities.
- Form friendships with peers.

TIPS TO TRY:

1

FOCUS ON THE GOOD

Everyday, praise your child when you see them do something good.

2

MODEL WAYS TO EXPRESS FEELINGS

You can help your children learn to cope with feelings by: teaching them to express their feelings in ways that are fit for their age. If children are too young or inexperienced to know what to say, model a simple sentence for them to copy. Showing them how to handle their feelings in healthy ways that do not hurt themselves or others. Encourage your children to say their feelings out loud and tell the other person how they feel. Serving as an example to your children by how you express or handle similar feelings.

3

BRAINSTORM FOR POSSIBILITIES

Sometimes the solution we are seeking is right there in front of us, but we just can't see it! Get together with others to "talk it out." Be open to all possibilities, even the unlikely ones. Begin by identifying any solution, option, or response.

4

GIVE VERBAL MESSAGES OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Provide praise to your children when they demonstrate pleasing or positive behaviors. Labeling the praise by naming the specific behavior is most helpful to children. Encourage children to try new things and be sure to praise children when they show good effort.

5

LISTEN TO YOUR CHILDREN

Acknowledging children's feelings will often help them feel heard and may decrease other acting-out behaviors. This also teaches children to have empathy for other's feelings. Take time to listen to your children's wants and needs. Listen to statements made about feelings or emotions. Demonstrate understanding of your children's emotions. Do not try to fix or play down their feelings. Reflect (repeat back by stating) the importance of their feelings.

6

RESPOND DON'T REACT

Your first reaction may not be your best, so slow down to consider your options. Be sure that your decision supports your needs and the priorities you have set for yourself and your family. Then, choose your best option and take action!



ALL CHILDREN NEED TO FEEL LOVED AND SECURE!

Nurturing and Attachment

Connection is key!

Building connection with your child will help them feel safe and loved so your child can be at their best.

Respond to your child with warmth and consistency.
Surround your child with loving and caring adults

- Recognize and nurture your child's strengths
- Model positive and healthy relationships.

TIPS TO TRY:

1

TAKE TIME TO CONNECT

Everyday, take time to connect with your child. Take a few minutes to listen, talk, and read with your child.

2

EXPRESS YOUR LOVE

Everyday, give your child a hug, smile, and say I love you.

3

CREATE CONVERSATION

Everyday, create conversations with your child by making eye contact, asking questions, being a good listener.

4

EAT TOGETHER

Everyday, eat a meal with your child.

5

ROUTINES

Everyday, make your child feel safe by having a routine. Prepare your child for any changes or new experiences.

6

POSITIVE PARENTING

Everyday, praise your child's efforts,