“Building Resilient Children”

Solana Beach School District
Social Emotional Learning Team
(District and Site Level)

Introductions

and

“Sole Mates”

Community Agreements

- Seek to understand, not to be understood.
- Listen with an open mind and “share the air”.
- Be Present.
- Keep phones and distractions to a minimum so we can make the most of our time together.
- Create a brave and supportive space.
- Share openly and honestly, while respecting others' viewpoints.
- Approach the material with curiosity.
- Be open to exploring new strategies, even if they feel different from what you've tried before.

Our hope for today's time together….

To identify and practice practical strategies for fostering resilience in our children.





What is resilience?

- The ability to “bounce back”
- It can be taught
- Adapting well in the face of adversity, significant stress, trauma, and/or tragedy

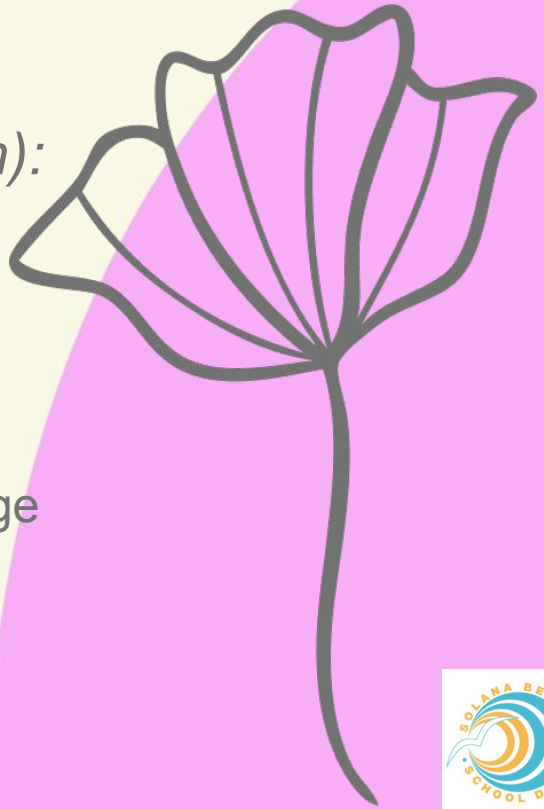
What is a challenge (either at school or home) that your child has overcome?



RESILIENCE

Resilience seems to derive from **four common factors** *(Harvard Graduate School of Education):*

- **Caring relationships with adults** – having someone who listens, supports, and believes in you.
- **Confidence and a sense of control** – feeling like “I can handle this” and that your choices matter.
- **Practice with coping skills** – learning ways to manage feelings, solve problems, and stay calm.
- **Hope and traditions** – drawing strength from faith, family, culture, or community values.



What Resilience is NOT

Being resilient does not mean that a person won't experience difficulty or distress.

Resilience is not a personality trait that only some people possess.

Resilience is not an optional extra. It is not just "nice to build"...it is "essential to build." Parents must put in the work .

Resilience is not simply "bouncing back" from difficult experiences, it also involves profound personal growth

Resilience is not just positive thinking

Being resilient does not mean you won't need help

STRATEGY #1: REST AND PLAY

Rest provides essential downtime for the brain to process experiences, while play allows children to explore emotions, develop problem-solving skills, and learn to navigate social interactions.



STRATEGY #2: STRONG CONNECTION



Supportive relationships are a foundation of resilience.

HANDOUT



Connection

What does a supportive relationship look like?

What does it sound like?

Now answer the opposite.











Strategies for Creating Connection*

- Check in with yourself
- Take cues from your children
- Create a “bubble of time” for your child
- Set a timer so your child sees the intentionality
- Show up fully without distractions
- Connect to your breath
- Notice/comment/narrate

*not an exhaustive list

STRATEGY #3: Model emotional awareness and validate the feeling

Children who can recognize and name their emotions may cope better with stress.



- What does this look like?
- What does it sound like?

Let's practice!

***What are YOU feeling as you talk through these?**

STRATEGY #4: ENCOURAGE PROBLEM SOLVING

Why Teach Problem Solving?

01

Builds Independence

Encourages children to find solutions rather than relying on adults immediately.

02

Reduces Frustration

Gives children a structured path to take when feeling stuck or overwhelmed.

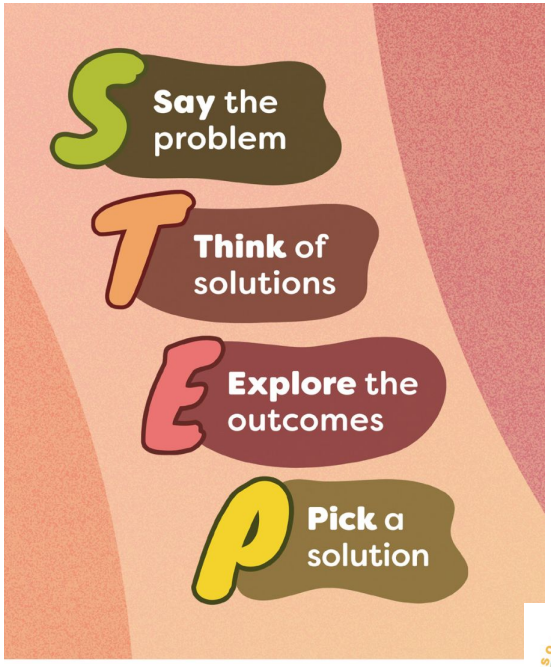
03

Strengthens Relationships

Promotes respectful communication and empathy during disagreements.

STRATEGY #4: ENCOURAGE PROBLEM SOLVING

- **S** Say the problem
- **T** Think of solutions
- **E** Explore the outcomes
- **P** Pick a solution
- ✓ *Evaluate how it went*



STRATEGY #4: ENCOURAGE PROBLEM SOLVING

How You Can Coach S.T.E.P .at Home

01 **Calm down first**
Remind children to take deep breaths or count to 10 before problem solving.

02 **Be a guide, not a fixer**
Ask guiding questions instead of giving immediate answers to build critical thinking.

03 **Praise effort and patience**
Acknowledge their attempts: *“I loved how you thought of a fair solution on your own.”*

Guided Questions

01 What do you think might help?

02 What have you tried already?

03 What will you need to make this work?

04 What will you do first?

05 When will you do it?

06 What do you think might happen when you do?

07 How did it go?

STRATEGY 5: NORMALIZE MISTAKES (MINDSET)

“I feel like I am failing"	Learning self-forgiveness
“My kids are frustrated, and so am I"	Learning to empathize
“I don't know how to handle how I feel"	Processing through emotions
“I feel helpless"	Finding what you can do
“I can't do everything"	Learning to let go
“Plans I had aren't working out"	When you can't change things, adapt
“I can’t mess this up"	Mistakes strengthen us

STRATEGY 6: Model Healthy Coping

Some ways to model healthy coping:

1. Take space when you need it---and give them space when they do!
2. Narrate your experience with emotions (in an age appropriate way). Talk through what you are doing to manage them.
3. Show your feelings--note, there is a difference between acknowledging anger and yelling in anger. We want to model handling anger well even when we are feeling it strongly.
4. Start small
5. Be kind to yourself
6. Make sleep a priority (adults and children).
7. Set boundaries and communicate them.
8. Movement (even short breaks help).

Handout (linked)

STRATEGY 7: Gratitude Practice

1. Gratitude journal
2. “Three things”--at dinner, car rides, etc.
3. Gratitude jar--review together
4. Thank you notes--not just for gifts
5. Gratitude walk



STRATEGY 8: Utilize Resources

1. Building a Supportive Relationship with your child
2. Problem Solving questions for kids
3. Feelings Check in Resources and strategies
    a. Blank template
    b. Mood Land
4. Helping Kids Bounce Back
5. Gratitude Rainbow
6. Second Step Problem Solving scenarios (by grade level K-5)

Optimistic Closure

I used to think…..

Now I think…..