



Yarralea Children's Centre

## Supporting your child to build Resilience and Friendships

Resilience is the ability to “bounce back” and cope with life’s ups and downs. Children need to build resilience skills to be able to both enjoy good times and deal with hard times. Helping children build their coping skills supports their mental health and wellbeing now and into the future.

New friendships can be tricky to navigate for some children which tests developing resilience skills. This is a delicate stage and it is critical for parents to be positive in their responses about possible friendships. It is important that children learn how to express how they are feeling to each other, and to have this acknowledged by the other child or nearby adult. We encourage the children to have a go first, and then seek adult assistance if they need it. This also lets the other child know how your child is feeling or if something has happened they didn’t like.

Some positive responses include:

- If another child says “I don’t like you”, it generally means that child doesn’t have the social skills or vocabulary to express what they really mean. A good response to this would be “Maybe that child doesn’t want to play what you’re playing.” “Remember how much fun you had with that child the other day, maybe they need some space or time alone.”
- If another child says, “I don’t want to play with you”, this could mean, that child needs some time alone. A positive response to this would be, “They want some time alone right now, maybe you’ll play with them later.” “That’s ok; remember the fun game you played last time. You could play that later.”
- If your child says, “I don’t want to go to Kinder”, a good response is to acknowledge how they are feeling by saying, “I see that you’re a bit nervous/sad about going to Kinder, but remember the fun you had when you told me about ..... After Kinder we can do .....
- If your child says, “S/he doesn’t listen to me” a good response would be, “maybe they didn’t hear you. You could repeat what you wanted to say, and if that doesn’t work, talk to a nearby teacher.”
- When entering another child’s play, it is best not to ask, “Can I play?” as this can often bring an automatic response of “No” from the other child with no further explanations. Instead they could ask, “What are you playing?” “Who are you being?” “What can I do to help?”

It is also important to acknowledge our philosophy on ‘Everyone can play’. This promotes an environment of inclusion which we actively promote throughout the program; however, there are also times when children need space for themselves or from other children.

## Skills and qualities that help children cope with life’s ups and downs

- **Trust** - that the world is safe and that there are caring people to help them.
- **Belief** - in their ability to do things for themselves and achieve their goals.
- **Feeling good** - about themselves and feeling valued for who they are by their parents and carers.
- **Optimism** - that things generally turn out well.
- **Regulation** - Ability to manage their feelings, thoughts and behaviours.

Children develop these skills and qualities and learn to keep a balance over time, initially through their experiences in coping with small stresses with help from supportive adults. When bigger stresses come along, even though at first they might feel quite distressed, children can draw on what they have learned about helping themselves to cope and feel better. Looking to others for support continues to be an effective way of coping.

<http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/mental-health-matters/social-and-emotional-learning/resilience>