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beyondblue launches new guide to help children learn resilience

Building resilience starts from day one, and the skills can be learned by all children including our most sensitive little ones, new research has found.

Parents and professionals who work with children can help kids develop resilience by creating safe challenges, encouraging supportive relationships and teaching them to think positively, according to new findings from *beyondblue*.

The research has been used to develop everyday strategies that can be applied in kindergartens, schools and at home to foster resilience in all children.

To coincide with the start of the 2018 school year, *beyondblue* is launching web-based tips for parents and a new practice guide for professionals, called *Building Resilience in Children aged 0-12*.

“Most of the existing research about resilience seems to focus on developing this skill during adolescence rather than the early years and through primary school, so we wanted to fill this gap,” *beyondblue* CEO Georgie Harman said.

“We know that half of all lifetime mental health issues emerge by the age of 14 and experts agree that increasing resilience among children aged 0–12 could potentially prevent mental health issues during childhood and later in life.”

Strategies found to help develop resilience in children include:

- **Talking about feelings – encouraging children to discuss their feelings can help them better understand, and regulate, themselves.**
- **Supporting independence – simple challenges can help them develop strategies to cope when they feel uncomfortable. Don’t be afraid to remove the training wheels and let them ride.**
- **Building closeness with family and friends – knowing they are loved helps build self-esteem.**
- **Promoting healthy thinking habits – positive thinking can be learned and used to overcome routine mental obstacles.**

The strategies are based on a 12-month research project lead by the Parenting Research Centre and Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth. The project reviewed academic research and generated expert consensus on resilience concepts. This research was complemented by consultations with parents, children and practitioners from around the country.

The work aimed to produce practical, evidence-based strategies for parents and professionals working with children, including early childhood educators, teachers and maternal child health nurses.

The *Building Resilience in Children aged 0-12* guide contains specific phrases and scenarios that professionals can apply to help build resilience in their students. It can be downloaded free of charge from the *beyondblue* website: beyondblue.org.au/resilience-guide

For parents, *beyondblue* has added simple, practical tips to its Healthy Families website: healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au/resilience

“With a strong new evidence base, this material will help professionals and parents navigate the overwhelming volume of information about resilience that is publicly available,” Ms Harman said.

The research was funded by *beyondblue* and major partner Future Generation Global Investment Company (FGG).

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FGG CEO Louise Walsh said the company was focused on delivering long-term funding for projects that would deliver meaningful impact.

“beyondblue’s focus on building resilience in children aged 0-12 is backed by the latest and most significant mental health research in this crucial early intervention space. We are delighted to have made this project a reality,” Ms Walsh said.

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Mental health professionals are available at the *beyondblue* Support Service via phone 24/7 on **1300 22 4636** or via www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support for online chat (3PM – 12AM AEST or email responses (within 24 hours).