

The #1 Tool for

BUILDING RESILIENT KIDS

And 6 Benefits of Practicing
Everyday!



Building Resilient Kids

Congratulations!

The fact that you are reading this tells me that you are an incredible person! You are someone who is a cut above because you seek support and guidance that will make a life long impact on the wellbeing of your family and legacy.

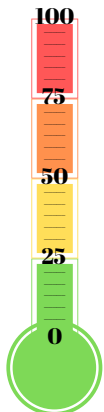
Because you're a high achieving parent who uses both warmth and structure to support your kids, there's a good chance you dream that they will always feel unconditional love, treat others with kindness & respect, create a joyful & fulfilling life, and pursue worthwhile goals that will positively contribute to the world. Chances are you've also experienced feelings of anxiety or worry that this dream will not be realized, whether it's because of circumstances beyond your control or the choices your children will make. I get it, I've been there!

Instead of shielding and "saving" our kids from suffering, or even focusing on making them happy, the best thing we can do to ensure our child's success in the future is to intentionally build resiliency skills now. Resilience is the most important skill to cultivate, especially in light of the rapidly changing technology and work landscape of the 21st century. Studies have shown that resilience is more important for achieving happiness and success than IQ or talent.

So what exactly do I mean by "resilience?" Resilience is the ability to rise above the inevitable challenges in life with confidence and optimism. It's more than just bouncing back from a setback, it's also the capacity to thrive. Common, everyday experiences around us provide plenty of opportunities to practice resiliency skills so that our kids are equipped for both the stress and joy of life.

While there are many layers to building resilience, there is one tool that stands out as the ultimate starting point for every child, teen, and adult. The following pages will introduce you to the benefits of practicing this tool called:

The Feeling Thermometer



The Feeling Thermometer (FT) is a tool to identify your level of comfort (green/yellow) and discomfort (orange/red). It is helpful to pay attention to how you are affected physically by your emotions in each area of the thermometer, and how interactions as a family are impacted. This is a simple tool and can be used in many ways, which is exactly why it is so effective to use with kids. It becomes easier with consistent practice. Scroll down for your own Feeling Thermometer PDF to print and use at home.

#1. Increase Emotional Awareness



Benefit #1 of using the Feeling Thermometer (FT) is that it will increase your child's emotional awareness. Being aware of your own emotions will set a foundation for self-control, self-regulation, and self-care.

The first step of emotional awareness is being able to identify a variety of emotions and feelings, such as happy, sad, mad, scared, or calm. Part of being a healthy person is experiencing the full range of emotions, and different situations can bring up one or more feelings at a time. Helping your child place those emotions on the Feeling Thermometer will help clarify how intensely it affects him/her.

With greater awareness, your child will become more mindful of what happens physiologically as he/she rises on the thermometer, which will then help him/her take action to prevent some of those unnecessary heated moments.

Children develop greater emotional awareness when they can recognize their emotional level and then consider how to shift uncomfortable feelings toward a more comfortable level. The FT shifts the focus toward "how can I get back to the green?," and is the starting point for actively coping after a setback. Before applying a coping strategy, first consider if your child's basic needs are being met (such as sleep, exercise, nutritious food, loving relationship, & fun).

#2. Encourage an Optimistic Perspective



Benefit #2 of using the Feeling Thermometer is that it encourages an optimistic perspective.

When a child feels hopeless about a problematic situation, he/she will likely give up on trying to do better. What's the point, right? But when we teach a child how to look at a challenging situation with optimism and flexibility, there is an opportunity for growth and doing better. This is much more motivating.

When your child uses the Feeling Thermometer to identify how she is doing in a situation, she has essentially placed the event in a larger context. Recognizing that she is "in the orange," for example, gives her a new visual perspective that it is possible to move toward green.

An important point is that your child is not "stuck" in the red or orange zones, and she can feel better. Feelings come and go. If your child insists that it is not possible to get back to the green, you can challenge that fixed thinking by asking about a past time when she was able to have fun again after a stressful experience. Your child didn't stay in the red forever, right?

Optimism is a mindset that promotes flexibility of thinking which then leads to problem-solving, all of which are critical for strong resilience.

#3. Promote Problem-Solving



Benefit #3 of using the Feeling Thermometer is that it promotes problem-solving by encouraging kids to think of possible solutions and how they will be impacted by them.

Resilience is characterized by the willingness to search for a solution when faced with a challenge, instead of giving up. For kids to feel confident in this, we need to teach them problem-solving skills. That is, teach kids to clarify what the central problem is as well as what they want, and then be able to think of various ways to respond before picking the one that seems best.

Using the Feeling Thermometer on a regular basis provides endless opportunities for your child to practice the skill of problem-solving. Once he has identified where he is on the FT, the next question is either "how do I get to the green?," or "how do I stay at this level?" This is where your child is encouraged to think of multiple possible solutions from a stance of curiosity.

With each possible solution, your child can then imagine how that will impact him in relation to the Feeling Thermometer. Will the solution really be successful in getting him to the green and staying there? Sometimes this isn't a simple answer, so parents are encouraged to give guidance based on your family expectations for behavior. For example, hitting his sister when he is "red" may actually get him closer to green, but ultimately is not effective.

#4. Connect Feelings, Thoughts, & Actions



Benefit #4 of using the Feeling Thermometer is that it illustrates how there is a connection between our feelings, thoughts, and actions.

The very act of slowing down to identify your current level on the Feeling Thermometer, challenging fixed thinking to shift toward optimism and curiosity, and then allowing problem-solving skills to help move you toward the green, actually reduces impulsive reactions and increases more appropriate responses. We want to help our children slow down their reactions and guide them with how to respond in a way that is in alignment with their values of who they want to be as a person.

When your child practices using the Feeling Thermometer on a regular basis, she will gain a sense of control over her feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. That sense of control is very important! Children who know they have the power to make changes in their responses, have the opportunity to make changes in their lives. Even though kids can't control everything, there are many things they do have control over that will lead to greater well-being.

It should be pointed out that the FT can be used as a way to track progress. For example, multiple printed copies of the FT can be used like journal pages, noting how you felt in various situations and how you got to a calmer state. When a child's progress is acknowledged, the helpful behavior is reinforced.

#5. Improve Communication



Benefit #5 of using the Feeling Thermometer is that it improves the communication within a family and leads to greater understanding and empathy.

Many families love using the Feeling Thermometer because it creates a common language for everyone (of all ages) to express how they are doing in an appropriate way. When kids have the ability to express how they are doing and then feel understood by someone else, acting out is reduced. Frequent use of the Feeling Thermometer to communicate has the ability to reduce negative communication patterns (such as whining, yelling, or withdrawal), and increase assertive and respectful communication as kids strive to maintain their ideal level of comfort.

Even very young kids can simply point to a color on the Feeling Thermometer to express how they are doing when they're unsure which emotions are coming up (or if they have several emotions at once). Children with more advanced emotional awareness can communicate greater detail about the intensity of their emotions to help family members understand their experience. Kids also benefit when parents communicate where they are on the FT and the plan to move toward the green. This kind of open communication builds empathy, a key ingredient in healthy relationships.

#6. Enhance Relationships



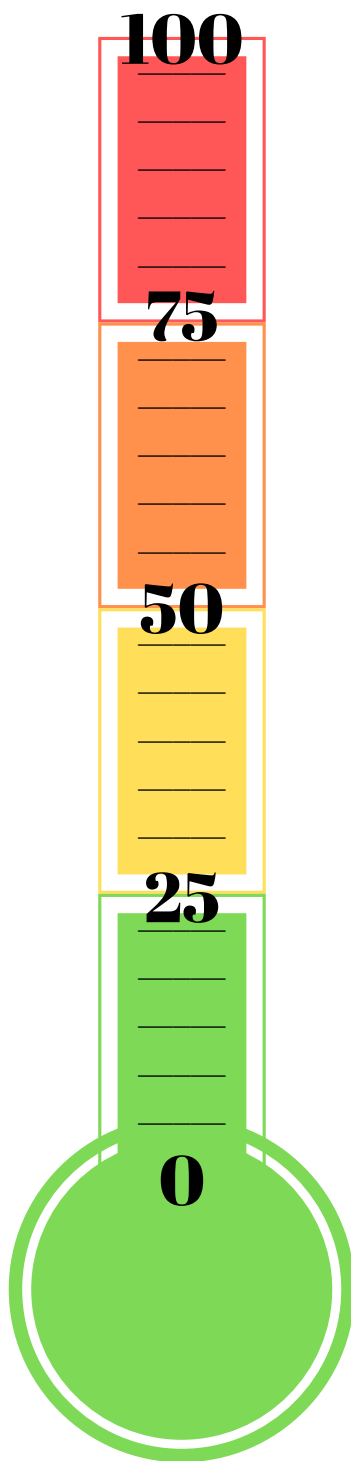
Benefit #6 of using the Feeling Thermometer is that it helps to enhance relationships through developing empathy and inspiring helpful action.

Often resilience is thought of as an individual trait, but the truth is that resilience is built in relationship with others. The most resilient people have strong and supportive connections to others; these are people they can turn to during the toughest of times, and can depend on for unconditional love. Helping teach our kids how to have genuine connection in their relationships is important for resilience, and the FT helps build that foundation.

More than just identifying your own feelings on the thermometer, being able to recognize where someone else is on the FT is a critical skill to develop. This awareness of others plays a role in a child's ability to make and maintain friendships, and respond with empathy and understanding. This skill will have a lasting impact as kids launch into adulthood and professional relationships.

Even more, the FT inspires the act of helping someone who is feeling upset. It can highlight how our actions impact others, and remind us to shift our thinking toward "how can I help (my friend) get back to the green?" When we ask the person what he/she needs from us for support, there is the opportunity to help and contribute to their well-being by getting them back to the green.

Feeling Thermometer



Hello, let me introduce myself...



*I'm Lori
and I'm excited
and ready to
serve you!*

I'm the founder of Building Family Excellence, and I walk alongside parents and kids as they navigate the big transitions and challenges in life. I equip kids and families with the skills necessary to not only overcome, but also to thrive with resilience, confidence, and optimism.

I specialize in helping you build on the strengths of your child to accelerate her/his resilience and promote well-being, while in the context of a supportive family environment. Resilience and well-being are skills that can be learned to help prevent unnecessary anxiety, depression, and conduct problems as your children launch toward adulthood.

As a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist and a Parent & Child Coach, I am dedicated to supporting, educating, and training my clients as they strengthen specific skill sets critical to their overall resilience and well-being.

Reach out and introduce yourself. I hope I will have the opportunity to get to know you! Perhaps resiliency skills training is the right fit for you and your kids. If you're ready to help your family thrive, visit my website to learn more. Together, we can build your most excellent family life!

Schedule your FREE 20 minute consultation today!

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