



Raising Resilient Kids in an Anxious World

Anxiety among children is on the rise. Thankfully, so is awareness about mental health. We're talking more openly about emotions, challenging stigma, and creating more supportive environments for kids. That's progress worth celebrating. But awareness alone isn't enough. A growing body of research points to the importance of building resilience—intentionally. And that starts with us.

As educators, parents, and caregivers, it's natural to worry about our children. We want to shield them from harm, whether that's physical injury or emotional pain from failure, frustration, or rejection. Our instinct to protect is powerful, rooted in empathy and deep connection. Their pain becomes our pain. Believe me as a parent of two myself, I get it!

And truthfully, the world can feel overwhelming. And for those who experience trauma, violence, poverty and racism, the dangers are very present and real. Our own stress and anxiety can make us want to withdraw completely. Those feelings often spill over onto our children. Through our words and actions, we may unintentionally send messages that undermine their capacity to respond to stress and anxiety in their own lives.

For example:

- Doing something for them that they could do with a little help, might save time in the moment, but it can also signal, “I don't believe you're capable of doing hard things.”
- Protecting them from a challenge that makes them anxious may say, “I don't think you can handle this,” or worse, “You'll probably fail.”
- Allowing kids to default to a screen when they have to wait or are bored, might communicate: “I don't think you can control yourself or emotionally regulate. You *need* this distraction to manage this.”

Of course, our job is to provide safety and limits. But we can do that while still encouraging independence and resilience. Small changes in how we support our kids can send empowering messages:

- This is tough *and* you can do hard things
- You are capable of learning and growing
- You have what it takes to solve problems to overcome challenges

This summer, we invite you to take on a new kind of challenge—not just *for* your child, but with them. Help build their sense of competence, and lay the groundwork for greater emotional resilience when life gets tough. Let's raise kids who are resilient not because they've been protected from struggle, but because they've been trusted to overcome them.



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www.danieleducationalservices.com

SUMMER CHALLENGE

Young Children



UNSTRUCTURED PLAY

- _____Climb a hill
- _____Go down the slide at a park
- _____Dig in dirt / garden
- _____Sit in the grass
- _____Walk in the woods
- _____Build a fort with blankets
- _____Creative play with a large box
- _____Something else_____



INDEPENDENCE

- _____Pick out clothes to wear
- _____Make bed
- _____Clean up toys
- _____Feed the pets
- _____Water plants
- _____Choose things to put in backpack for an outing
- _____Brush teeth
- _____Make a snack
- _____Something else_____



WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

You did that all by yourself!

You are learning new things!

Way to go!

**YOU
DID
IT!**



SUMMER CHALLENGE

Elementary Children

UNSTRUCTURED PLAY

- _____Join kids playing in the neighborhood (not a play date)
- _____Ride bike / scooter up and down the block without adult
- _____Set up a lemonade stand or other small business
- _____Climb a tree
- _____Build with legos (no kit/directions)
- _____Paint or draw without instruction
- _____Look for cool rocks or bugs
- _____Something else_____



INDEPENDENCE

- _____Clean room
- _____Make lunch for the family
- _____Do own laundry
- _____Walk the dog
- _____Order at a restaurant
- _____Set an alarm to wake up
- _____Go into a store alone to buy something
- _____Bake a cake
- _____Something else_____



WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

You were nervous and you did it anyway!

Wow! I'm impressed.

You really know what you are doing!



★ YOU'VE ★
★ GOT THIS ★

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SUMMER CHALLENGE

Adolescents



RESPONSIBILITY

- _____ Unsupervised time with friends
- _____ Manage own money
- _____ Get a part time job
- _____ Manage own schedule
- _____ Use public transportation
- _____ Resolve conflicts without adult involvement
- _____ Learn cooking skills beyond the basics
- _____ Learn to use tools
- _____ Something else _____



PROMOTING AUTONOMY (A CHALLENGE FOR ADULTS)

- _____ Listen to understand, rather than to be understood
- _____ Involve them in all decisions that affect them
- _____ Promote active problem-solving
- _____ Teach & model effective conflict resolution skills
- _____ Allow them to speak for themselves
- _____ Support exploration of diverse of interests
- _____ Allow them to learn from failure (resist rescuing)
- _____ Encourage them to face fears and take on challenges
- _____ Something else _____



WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

I trust your decision.

I know you can do it.

You are brave.

