

Navigating Your Child's Mental Health and Developing Resilience

Age 6 Summary

Why Navigating Your Child's Mental Health and Developing Resilience?

Mental health is just as important as physical health! Children face challenges like feeling nervous about school, getting frustrated with friends, or dealing with big feelings.

STEP 1  **Get Your Child Thinking by Getting Their Input**

- *“What made you happy or excited today?”*
- *“Did anything make you feel a little sad or frustrated?”*
- *“Is there something you felt worried about today?”*
- *“What do you think that person (or character in a book or on TV) is feeling?”*
- *“Why do you think that person reacted that way? Do you think they could have done something different?”*

Trap: Avoid saying, “Don’t worry about it.” Instead, say, “It’s okay to feel sad sometimes. I’m here to help.”

STEP
2



Teach New Skills

- Model naming your own feelings, like “I’m feeling a bit tired, so I’ll take a quick break.”
- Teach simple calming actions, like counting to five, imagining their favorite place, or taking a break.
- Once you’ve talked about it, help your child move past the emotion by shifting your own emotion and engaging in something different with your child. For example, you both could draw together, go on a walk, play a game, or talk about something different.

STEP
3



Practice to Grow Skills and Develop Habits

- Start a daily check-in where you each share one happy moment or one tough moment.
- Talk about how feelings can change, like, “*You seemed nervous before school, but you looked happy afterward. How come?*”
- Recognize their efforts, e.g., “*I noticed you took deep breaths when you felt upset. That was a great way to calm down!*”

STEP
4



Support Your Child’s Development and Success

- Remind them that it’s okay to take breaks when they feel upset, like “*If you feel overwhelmed, let’s take a moment to breathe.*”
- On challenging days, ask, “*Is there something that made today hard? Let’s figure out a way to feel better together.*”

STEP
5



Recognize Efforts

- Highlight specific successes, like "*I'm proud of how you handled it when your friend didn't want to play. That was very patient of you.*"
- Reward their effort with quality time, like reading together or playing a game they enjoy.
- Offer specific praise, saying, "*It was brave of you to tell me you were feeling scared instead of holding it inside.*"

Trap: It can be easy to resort to bribes when recognition and occasional rewards are underutilized. If parents or those in a parenting role frequently resort to bribes, it is likely time to revisit the five-step process.

Recommended Citation: Center for Health and Safety Culture. (2024). *Navigating Your Child's Mental Health and Developing Resilience Age 6 Summary*. Retrieved from <https://www.ToolsforYourChildsSuccess.org>

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