
Childhood Resilience in Problem Solving

INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with the article, “Childhood Resilience,” from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The questions and activities in this handout could be used in a work session (e.g., professional learning community, professional development session), for individual coaching, or for self-reflection.

Goals

- ◆ Understand why resilience is an important skill for problem-solving with tasks for children who have experienced trauma.
- ◆ Reflect on the resilience of the children in your care who have experienced trauma and the ways you support children’s resilience in the learning environment.
- ◆ Develop an action plan to support children’s development of resilience and promote their problem-solving skills.

Activity

- ◆ Read the article.
- ◆ After reading, use the questions below to guide your discussion and action plan.
- ◆ Implement your plan and adjust as needed to support preschoolers’ problem-solving with tasks.

...children will be able to adapt to adversity and threats when their basic human systems are nurtured and supported.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ◆ What caught your attention from the article? What made that fact, excerpt, or example meaningful to you?

- ◆ The article discusses three factors that contribute to childhood resilience: cognitive development and problem-solving skills, self-regulation skills, and caring relationships with adults.
 - Why is resilience an important skill for children as they develop the ability to problem-solve?
 - The article notes that children who have experienced trauma may not be able to fully engage the problem-solving part of the brain. Reflect on the skills of the children in your care.
 - How might this impact children’s development of problem-solving skills? How might this hinder their development of resilience?
 - What kinds of tasks are children successful in problem-solving?
 - What behaviors do you observe during challenging tasks?
 - How do children respond to your supports and scaffolds during challenging tasks?
 - Where might they need more support to develop resilience?

- ◆ As noted in the article, “One of our jobs then becomes to draw out children’s natural playfulness, which gives them the opportunity to discover, learn, and heal.”
 - What play experiences do you offer in your classroom that provide opportunities for children to practice problem-solving and resilience?
 - How do you provide support for children who experience challenges during play? How has your support helped children to persist through solving problems?

- ◆ Develop an action plan to support children’s development of resilience to encourage their problem-solving skills.
 - Identify the children in your care who have experienced trauma that can benefit from additional support to develop their problem-solving skills.
 - Determine what strategies you will use to support their resilience. How will you:
 - Encourage problem-solving
 - Support self-regulation
 - Provide a caring relationship
 - Carefully monitor children’s progress and adjust your supports as needed.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about supporting problem-solving with tasks:

- ◆ **Source:** Harvard University: Center on the Developing Child
 - ◆ **Article:** The Science of Resilience
 - ◆ **Link:** <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-the-science-of-resilience/>
 - ◆ **Description:** This article discusses the ways childhood adversity and trauma can impact the development of resilience, and consequently, problem-solving skills. The article outlines factors that contribute to the development of resilience.
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- ◆ **Source:** Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center
 - ◆ **Podcast:** Trauma and Resilience
 - ◆ **Link:** <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/podcast/trauma-resilience>
 - ◆ **Description:** This podcast discusses how a trauma-informed learning environment can support children's development of resilience, helping them solve problems.