



# Happiness: Build Resilience and Optimism

## Build Resilience

- Make connections - teach social skills, maintain family connections, join groups as family
  - Teach social skills
  - Maintain family connections
- Help child to help others – chores at home, volunteer, brainstorm ways to help others
- Maintain regular daily routines – encourage child to develop own routines
- Take a break – teach child how to focus on other than worries, build in unstructured time to the day
- Teach self-care – model eating properly, exercise, rest; make sure child has time for fun and down time
- Help child set goals and move in small steps – praise progress, avoid perfectionism
- Nurture positive self-worth – focus on child's positive behavior, help child
  - Remember ways she has been successful
  - Trust self to solve problems
    - o See humor in life
- Look for opportunities for self-discovery
  - Reflect with child on learning from difficulties
  - Talk about change as natural part of life
- Tell stories about grandparents and other relatives – where they come from, overcoming adversity





## **Build Optimism – help pessimists**

- Respond with empathy. Acknowledge child's feelings
- Take a break. Taking short break may help child step out of negative thinking trap
  - Hug, a drink of water, funny joke or doing something fun might be emotional reset.
  - Also helps child realize that not everything is terrible
  - Things seem more manageable when child is not tired or hungry
- Challenge all-or-nothing thinking.
  - Breaking down tasks or events helps child see beyond pessimistic view that she can't do anything and nothing ever goes her way
  - Point out small steps accomplished
- Recognize your own pessimism and adjust that behavior or at least acknowledge
- Address complaining habit. Even when good things happen, may point out how the events were less than perfect.
  - Make family rule that everyone who complains has to follow up by making two positive statements
- Remember happy endings. Pessimistic children get stuck believing, "It's bad now, so it will always stay bad."
  - Help child remember the positive "I remember when you didn't know the sounds of any letters, but now you can read!"
  - Remembering past happy endings can help child muster hope

