

Parenting *ideas* INSIGHTS

Building parent-school partnerships

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Helping kids leapfrog their difficulties with these 5 ideas



A parent's attitude to their child's difficulties will determine how successfully they meet and overcome many of the obstacles and hurdles they meet.

Whether it's going to school for the first time, making new friends or even going to school camp, children often experience difficulties that they need to overcome.

When children overcome problems and deal with unpleasant situations they learn they are capable, which is the basis of self-esteem and confidence.

Children's resilience is fostered when they overcome problems and manage unpleasant social situations such as teasing or going into new situations. Protecting kids from challenging experiences robs them of chances to learn, develop and grow.

Resilient kids look back and draw on skills and understandings they have developed in the past to help them deal with present challenges. For instance, a sixteen year old girl recently revealed how her time spent on a twelve-day adventure camp helped her overcome the homesickness she experienced on a six-month student exchange.

She remembered how on the first day of her school camp she didn't think she could make it – but she did. She experienced those same doubts early in her exchange but she knew that just as she had coped before she would do so again, but this time in more difficult circumstances. She was drawing on the same resources.

Here are five great parenting ideas to help your kids leapfrog their difficulties:

1 Frame the problem as a challenge:

Frame the difficulty as a challenge rather than a problem. Kids take their cues from their parents so the frame of 'challenge' gives kids something to rise to rather than be overwhelmed by.

2 Coach kids to do well:

Talk kids through their challenges, give them ideas to cope and manage. Consider rehearsing some skills or language that they may need.

3 Show confidence they will succeed:

Children generally meet their parents' expectations so make sure your expectations are realistic, positive and supportive of their feelings.

4 Give kids a chance:

Allow kids to approach challenges in their own way without constantly checking on them. Your nervousness is definitely catching.

5 Celebrate their success:

Even if they were partially successful, such as they went to school camp for two out of the three days, then praise their efforts. They've got a great building block for next time.

The attitude and approach of parents and teachers will determine how successfully children and young people meet and overcome many of the hurdles they encounter. That attitude needs to be courageous, sensitive and hopeful that your child will meet, and overcome with assistance, all the challenges they encounter.



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