

RESILIENT KIDS

NEWSLETTER by Michael Grose - Australia's leading parenting educator

Teach children to persist

The ability to persist at a task and see it through to the end is one of the most important success skills that you can teach a child.

There are numerous times every day when children must persist rather than give in. A toddler learning to tie shoelaces must persist. A primary aged student must show determination to finish tasks and a secondary student needs to work through difficulties, particularly those he doesn't understand or complete right away.

They need to be able to persist when work gets hard or life gets tough. They need the 'stickability' to work through difficulties and hang in there when things don't go their way.

Some children are more naturally predisposed to persist than others. They have a determined, even competitive streak in their temperament that doesn't allow them to give in. These children and young people can drive themselves very hard to succeed.

Parents and teachers can develop persistence in children. Research suggests that persistence is a temperamental factor that can be improved over time.

Just as adults can promote persistence they can also impede its development by making life too



easy for children so that they don't have opportunities to persist or hang in there.

Parents who allow children to stop work when it gets too hard, stay home from school for a minor reason or give up on a sport because they are not succeeding straight away are not doing their children any favours. They are depriving children of opportunities to develop persistence.

Parents can promote persistence by encouraging their children to keep going and not give in at the slightest hurdle or difficulty.

Parents can be a sounding board for children's gripes but they should show confidence in their ability to cope and get through their difficulties.

"You can do it" is far more powerful in terms of promoting an attitude of persistence than "If it is a little too hard then try something else."

Let children know that there is a correlation between effort and success. In fact, they need to learn that by GIVING EFFORT they will more than likely experience more success.

The ability to persist in the face of difficulties maybe an old-fashioned quality but it is one of the best success attributes that children will ever develop.

WHAT'S YOUR CHILD LIKE?

HOW PERSISTENT IS YOUR CHILD?

DOES HE

- Stick at a task until it is completed, no matter what? **Yes [2] No [0]**
- Become easily distracted by others when he has a task to complete? **Yes [0] No [2]**
- Complete lengthy assignments on time? **Yes [2] No [0]**
- Make excuses for difficult situations rather than face challenges? **Yes [0] No [2]**

- Never give in when playing a game or sport? **Yes [0] No [2]**

SCORE:

- 10:** A tough type. You have a terrier on your hands. Can be hard on himself.
- 6-8:** Hangs in there. Maybe he has a balanced attitude.
- 0-4:** Gives in easily. Needs to be reminded to hang in there.



TRY THIS...

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

To promote persistence in your children try the following four strategies:

- Develop a **vocabulary** for persistence. Terms like Hang Tough, Work Hard and Hang In There need to be part of their every day vocabulary.
- Point out** to children when they stick at a task. Let them see when they have been persistent and that persistence generally pays off.
- Help children to **remember** times when they experienced success by **HANGING IN** when they were younger.
- Talk about **HARD WORK** with your children. They need to understand that to be successful they need to do things that are **NOT** fun or easy. While it would be good if all work and learning was fun, in reality, this is not always the case.

ACTION PLAN

First Step . . .

Next Step . . .

For more ideas about promoting resilience in children visit www.parentingideas.com.au

QUOTE

"Persistence and patience have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish."

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS