

Kids are resilient.

It's a saying I've heard throughout my life. But are they born resilient?

Studies have shown children learn the skills of resiliency from stress experiences they have in early childhood.

Stress is a natural and inevitable part of childhood, but *the types of stress* can make a difference in the impact on a child's brain and body with potential effects that last a lifetime.

Stress for children has been itemized into three types- positive, tolerable, and toxic.

Examples of positive stress is childcare drop offs, immunizations, playground injuries, or losing a game. These stressors are safe and required for a child to develop independence, confidence, coping skills and resiliency.

The next type is tolerable stress. These include deaths, divorces, natural or man-made tragedy, and poverty. These are more challenging, complicated and longer lasting. With the proper support of caring adults this type of stress need not have detrimental effects to a child's well- being, but there is potential for lasting physical or emotional damage.

The third type of stress is toxic stress, also known as adverse childhood experiences. This is the most dangerous types of stress and has been linked to adulthood chronic diseases such as heart failure and diabetes. Toxic stress causes a chronic fight or flight condition, with increased cortisol responses, it creates a hyper-responsive stress response in the body and changes the architecture in the brain. This prolonged activation of the stress responder systems that is seen in children who are abused, neglected, and malnourished, or with severe maternal depression. Supportive relationships can help buffer young children from the effects of trauma/toxic stress.

It is through the work of Early Childhood programs and family programs that help prevent damage from childhood adversities and build resiliency. Programs such as home visits for newborns and their families, parenting education/parenting programs, social/financial support for parents, mental illness and substance abuse treatment, and high-quality childcare all help give children the support and buffering systems they need to be resilient.

For more information on any of these programs and resources please contact your Early Childhood Coalition.

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