

Overcoming the Odds

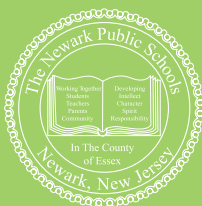


RESOURCE GUIDE



Connect with Kids

- Resiliency Fact Sheet
- Parent Tip Sheet
- Grades 3-5 Lesson Plan
- Grades 6-8 Lesson Plan
- Grades 9-12 Lesson Plan
- Discussion Questions



Marion A. Bolden
Superintendent



Safe Schools
Healthy Students



Character Traits

All *Connect with Kids*
programs address these
26 character traits:

Caring/Compassion

Civility

Cooperation

Courtesy

Freedom

Helpfulness

Honor

Justice/Fairness

Loyalty

Peace

Respect

Self-Control

Tolerance

Citizenship

Conviction

Courage

Diligence

Generosity

Honesty

Integrity

Kindness

Patience

Perseverance

Responsibility

Togetherness

Trustworthiness



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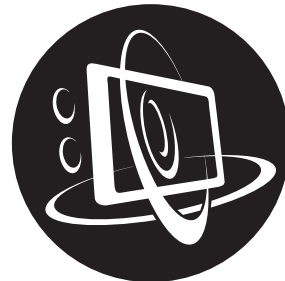
Connect with Kids

Overcoming the Odds

This thought-provoking program explores why some children succeed in spite of the tremendous odds against them. What do resilient kids have in common, and what can we learn from their stories about parenting, educating and succeeding?

This resource guide is designed to accompany the video entitled *Overcoming the Odds*. This resource guide includes:

- Resiliency Fact Sheet
- Parent Tip Sheet
- Grades 3-5 Lesson Plan
- Grades 6-8 Lesson Plan
- *The Seven Resiliencies Worksheet*
- *Resiliency Worksheets #1 and #2*
- Grades 9-12 Lesson Plan
- *The Seven Resiliencies Worksheet*
- “*Still I Rise*” Handout
- Discussion Questions
- Student Self-Reflection Questions



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Overcoming the Odds

Resiliency Fact Sheet

WHAT IS RESILIENCY?

Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from frustrations and to recover from setbacks. Resilient individuals adapt to change, stress or problems and are able to take things in stride. The result of this bouncing back is a feeling of success and confidence.

WHAT TRAITS DOES A RESILIENT CHILD POSSESS?

According to the study *Fostering Resiliency in Kids* by Bonnie Bernard (1991), resilient children have the following attributes in common:

- **Social Competence** – Resilient children respond to others and elicit responses from others easily. They are active, both physically and socially, show signs of being flexible (even in infancy) and adapt well to change. Quite often, resilient children have a great sense of humor and can laugh at life's situations and themselves.
- **Problem-Solving Skills** – Resilient children are able to think through challenging situations and follow through on finding a solution.
- **Autonomy** – Resilient children know who they are, know they can act independently and feel a sense of control over their situations and/or environments.
- **Sense of Purpose and Future** – Resilient children have the ability to plan and set goals. They are typically optimistic in the way they view the world.

CAN RESILIENCY BE LEARNED?

As a parent or caregiver, you *can* teach resiliency skills to children. Continued practice will improve a

child's ability to recognize and use these skills independently. Experts say that children learn resiliency best when they are in an environment that...

- Offers caring and support.
- Holds high expectations for behavior, attitude and work ethic.
- Encourages active, meaningful participation in family, school and community activities.

According to Darryl Connor in *Managing at the Speed of Change*, adults can model resiliency strategies for children by being positive, focused, flexible, organized and proactive.

HOW DOES RESILIENCY AFFECT ACADEMICS?

In 2004, three researchers from WestEd – Thomas L. Hanson, Gregory Austin and June Lee-Bayha – studied the relationship between resiliency and academic progress. Students in schools that offered the three environmental influences noted above showed significant strides in academic performance. These findings were true even for students in high-risk schools – as long as the schools provided “caring relationships, high expectation messages, and opportunities for meaningful participation and contribution.”

RESOURCES

Lessons for Living

Resiliency in Action

WestEd



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Overcoming the Odds

Parent Tip Sheet

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING A RESILIENT NATURE

Experts say all children are born resilient, but it takes several environmental factors to ensure that they maintain that resiliency. These factors include:

- **Caring and Support** – Children must know that their parents love them unconditionally and will always be there for them. In cases where parents are not present, an adult mentor – such as a relative, teacher, coach or church leader – can provide genuine caring and support to help foster resiliency. Children with mentors show great resiliency as well. Find significant adults in your child's life that can offer caring and support.
- **Clear and Consistent** – Be clear about your expectations and have high expectations for your child's behavior, academic effort, academic progress, and participation in family and outside activities. Make sure that school and teacher expectations are also clearly stated and understood. Set realistic goals with your children and help them adjust the goals if they cause frustration.
- **Participation in Home and Community Life** – Assign chores and responsibilities at home. When children participate in and complete tasks, they feel worthy and capable of being an important member of the family. Even the youngest children can complete tasks that will benefit them individually and the family as a unit. In addition, find ways for your child to participate in school, as well as in activities and service opportunities in the community.

As a parent, you can help build resiliency skills in your children by working on your *own* resiliency skills. The Nemours Foundation suggests developing the following attitudes and behaviors:

- Start thinking of change as challenging, not as problematic.
- Learn to see problems as temporary: "This, too, shall pass." Problems are opportunities for finding solutions, not barriers that stop all progress.
- Learn how to set achievable goals and work toward them with optimism and persistence – believing in your future success.
- Solve problems as they come up, when they are manageable. Don't let small problems grow into bigger ones.
- Seek to improve relationships with family, friends, colleagues and neighbors. Keep your commitments.
- Know where to find the support you need, and learn how to ask for help.
- Find familiar and new ways to have fun and relax.

When we can identify a challenge, focus on the process of meeting it, get ourselves organized to face it, and be positive and flexible in our approach to the challenge, then we are truly resilient and ready to teach our children how to be resilient as well.

RESOURCES

"Fostering Resiliency in Kids: Protective Factors in Family, School and Community" by Bonnie Benard, WestEd

Lessons for Living

The Nemours Foundation



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Overcoming the Odds

Grades 3-5 Lesson Plan

Resilient Voices

For the
Classroom

PROJECT AND PURPOSE

After selecting a sample obstacle to overcome, students will create a life-size picture of themselves and write the “internal dialogue” they would have with themselves to show their resiliency.

OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- List problems they face in their everyday lives.
- Define resilience.
- Create an internal dialogue that illustrates a resilient attitude.

MATERIALS

- Place for recording ideas for brainstorming (black/white board, paper, etc.)
- Large paper to fit the size of each student's body, one piece per student
- Art supplies (markers, pencils, pens, crayons, etc.)
- *Optional:* Examples of comic strips/cartoons with word bubbles – put these on an overhead or make a copy for each student

PROCEDURE

1. Discuss the meaning of resiliency, including this definition by a 15-year-old student: “Bouncing back from problems and stuff with more power and more smarts.”
2. Discuss how the kids in the video exhibited resiliency and the obstacles they had to overcome to succeed. Ask the class: *What do you think the kids in the video said to themselves to keep on trying? What words and phrases would you have used if you were in their place?* Record student responses on the board.
3. Ask the class: *What do you think the kids' parents or teachers said to help them keep going?* Record student responses on a separate list.
4. Continue the discussion using the following questions:
 - *What are some problems you face each day that test your resiliency?*
 - *How do you talk to yourself to keep going?*
 - *What do other people say to help you?*
 - *Do some people say things that try to bring you down? What do they say?*
5. Divide the class into pairs. Give each pair two large sheets of paper and have the students trace each other to create a silhouette of themselves. Allow time for students to color and personalize their pictures.
6. Next, ask each student to think of one challenge he or she faces every day and to write it across the bottom of his or her paper. Refer to the discussion from Procedure #4 for ideas, which might include getting up early for school, studying, trying to make friends, completing chores, getting along at home, etc.



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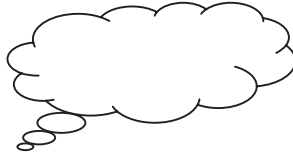
Overcoming the Odds

Grades 3-5 Lesson Plan

Resilient Voices *(cont.)*

For the
Classroom

- Next, show the class how characters in comic strips often have “thought clouds” above their heads when they are thinking to themselves. Then show a “word bubble” that is used when a character is speaking.



- Explain to the class: *On your paper, draw a thought cloud above your head. Now think about the challenge that you wrote on the bottom of your paper. What do you tell yourself to stay resilient when you confront that challenge? What do you say to keep yourself going? Write those thoughts inside your thought cloud.* Walk among the students and explain this step as necessary, reading aloud some of the words that you see students writing in their thought bubbles.
- When students have written at least two phrases, ask them to create two word bubbles on their paper. The word bubbles will be coming from the edge of the paper, like someone is speaking to the student from outside the picture. Explain: *Now, think about some of the words other people use to help you keep going – to help you be resilient. Maybe it is a coach who says, “You can do it!” or a librarian who tells you that your reading is getting better every day. In your two word bubbles, write down what other people say to you to help you be resilient and keep trying.*
- Display the students’ work around the room and ask the class to title the exhibit. As the week goes by, ask a few students each day to explain their drawings.
- Continue to ask the class: *What do these pictures tell us about our own resiliency?*

EVALUATION

- Did each student participate in the discussion?
- Did each student help a partner trace a silhouette?
- Did each student create appropriate word bubbles?



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Overcoming the Odds

Grades 6-8 Lesson Plan

Resilient Heroes

PROJECT AND PURPOSE

Students will examine the life of a famous or historical person in terms of the Seven Resiliencies.

OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- Understand the Seven Resiliencies, adapted from Project Resilience.
- Select and research the life of a famous or historical person and analyze his or her accomplishments in terms of the Seven Resiliencies.
- Apply the Seven Resiliencies to their own lives.

MATERIALS

- *The Seven Resiliencies* handout
- *Resiliency Worksheets #1 and #2*
- Research materials (media center, Internet access, etc.)
- Paper, pencils, pens

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute and discuss *The Seven Resiliencies* handout. Ask students for examples of how a person shows the strengths on the list.
2. Ask the class: *We often think of heroes as people who show great resilience. Can you think of anybody in history, anyone famous or even anyone you know, who has shown great resilience in the face of great challenges?* Keep a list of student responses on the board. You might offer the following additional examples: Gloria Estefan, Oprah Winfrey, Dolly Parton, Lance Armstrong, Helen Keller, Annie Sullivan, President Teddy Roosevelt, Thomas Alva Edison and Harriet Tubman.
3. Ask students to select a name from the list – or identify another hero – to study. Record each student's choice on a list for yourself.
4. Distribute *Resiliency Worksheet #1* and explain: *Use Resiliency Worksheet #1 to analyze your selected person's life and accomplishments in terms of the Seven Resiliencies. Consider the following questions:*
 - *How did he or she demonstrate some of the resiliencies?*
 - *Did he or she have many of the strengths? Which was strongest?*
 - *What did this person do or say to illustrate, or prove to you, that he or she demonstrated a resiliency?*
5. Allow time for students to use research materials to locate information. When they have completed their worksheets, gather as a class and share the information.
6. When everyone has had a chance to share, distribute *Resiliency Worksheet #2* and explain: *Now consider your own life. Which of the Seven Resiliencies do you think you have? How have you demonstrated any or all of the Seven Resiliencies in your life? (NOTE: This may be a good homework assignment.)*

For the
Classroom



Connect with Kids

Overcoming the Odds

Grades 6-8 Lesson Plan

Resilient Heroes *(cont.)*

7. When the assignment is complete, you may choose to have students share this information or ask them to write a journal entry or a formal paper that will be kept confidential. To wrap up the lesson, ask: *How are we all resilient at one time or another? How can we keep ourselves resilient so we can feel like we are secure throughout life?*

EVALUATION

- Did students understand the Seven Resiliencies?
- Did each student complete *Worksheet #1* on a famous person?
- Did each student complete *Worksheet #2*, describing his or her own resiliencies?

For the
Classroom



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The Seven Resiliencies

(Adapted from *Project Resilience* by Steven and Sybil Wolin)

The following seven attributes describe ways you can show resiliency when facing challenges. Keep in mind that you – like most people – may show some, but not all, of these attributes/strengths when faced with difficult situations.

INSIGHT—

Having **insight** means asking questions of yourself, even when the questions are difficult. If you answer honestly, you can learn and move forward. Having insight helps you understand the problem and how to best solve it. Insight helps you analyze the situation from as many perspectives as you can.

INDEPENDENCE—

Showing **independence** means keeping a healthy distance between yourself and other people so you can think things through and do what is best for you. It also means knowing how to step away from people who seem to cause trouble or make things worse by their words or actions.

RELATIONSHIPS—

Building **relationships** means finding connections with people that are healthy for both of you and keeping those relationships growing.

INITIATIVE—

Taking the **initiative** means taking control of the problem and working to solve it. It means asking questions of yourself and answering them as honestly as you can, so you can move past a sticky situation. Sometimes people who take initiative become the leader in activities and teamwork.

CREATIVITY—

Using **creativity** requires that you use your imagination or resourcefulness to express your feelings, thoughts and plans in some unique way. Remember that when you make something happen, it shows resiliency of spirit and a positive attitude.

HUMOR—

Humor is the ability to find something funny (especially yourself!) in a situation, even when things seem really bad. Humor often gives you the perspective needed to relieve tension and make a situation better.

MORALITY—

Being a person of **morality** means knowing the difference between right and wrong and being willing to choose and stand up for what is right.

Resource

Project Resilience

Name: _____

Date: _____

Resiliency Worksheet #1

Name of famous "hero:" _____

In the spaces below, describe how your chosen "hero" demonstrates or demonstrated any of the seven resiliencies listed below.

1. Insight

2. Independence

3. Relationships

4. Initiative

5. Creativity

6. Humor

7. Morality

Name: _____

Date: _____

Resiliency Worksheet #2

In the spaces below, describe how you have demonstrated any of the seven resiliencies in your own life.

1. Insight

2. Independence

3. Relationships

4. Initiative

5. Creativity

6. Humor

7. Morality



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Overcoming the Odds

Grades 9-12 Lesson Plan

Resilient Poetry

PROJECT AND PURPOSE

Students will read *The Seven Resiliencies* handout and consider how resiliency applies to their own lives. Students will then read and discuss Maya Angelou's poem "Still I Rise" to better understand how resiliency overcomes oppression.

OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- Consider how resilient qualities apply to their own lives in dealing with problems.
- Discuss how the poem illustrates resiliency over oppression.

MATERIALS

- "Still I Rise" handout
- *The Seven Resiliencies* handout
- Paper, pens, pencils

PROCEDURE

1. If possible, place desks/chairs in a circle so everyone can see each other.
2. Distribute *The Seven Resiliencies* handout and discuss the terms and definitions.
3. Ask students to think of examples from history or from their own lives where these strengths made a person or a group of persons resilient enough to overcome tremendous obstacles. Have students be specific in their answers.
4. Distribute the "Still I Rise" handout and ask students to read it silently to themselves.
5. When everyone is ready, have the class do a "read-around." This is when each member of the class reads one physical line of the poem, even if it is only one word, in order around the circle. Begin the poem with a different person and read-around a second time.
6. Read-around a third time, this time asking each reader to read his or her line of poetry with a strong emotion or attitude that matches the emotion or attitude of the words in the line. Students may also change the volume of the lines and the speed of delivery.
7. Ask the group which lines were their favorites or which lines had the most impact on them and why.
8. Ask: *Who is this poem about? How do you know? Which lines tell you that?*
9. Discuss the following question: *How does this poem illustrate any of the Seven Resiliencies?*
10. Assign students to write a personal response to this poem either in a formal paper or an informal journal entry.

For the
Classroom



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Overcoming the Odds

Grades 9-12 Lesson Plan

Resilient Poetry *(cont.)*

EVALUATION

- Did each student participate in the resiliency discussion?
- Did each student read aloud at his or her turn in the read-around?
- Did students understand the concepts of resiliency over oppression in the poem?
- Did students complete the written assignment?

For the
Classroom



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Resource

Project Resilience



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Still I Rise

by Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise

I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise

Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

I rise

I rise

I rise.



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Overcoming the Odds

Discussion and Questions

Students, educators and families can discuss resiliency after viewing the show. Use these questions as a guide.

1. Define resilience.
2. What challenges did the kids in the video face? How did they overcome the challenges? How does this make them resilient?
3. What skills should a person learn to become more resilient?
4. What are the three “Ps” that make it hard to be resilient?
5. Discuss the Robert Louis Stevenson quote: “Life is not so much a matter of holding good cards, but of playing a poor hand well.” What does it mean to you? How does it relate to resilience?
6. Do you believe that “every child can succeed ... against all odds?” Explain your answer.
7. How is Melanie’s story a good illustration of resiliency?



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Overcoming the Odds

Student Self-Reflection Questions

For the
Classroom

1. The video speaks of the three Ps that make it hard to be resilient. *Permanent* means the problems can't be solved. *Pervasive* means the problems are everywhere in your life. *Personal* means you feel as if it's all your fault. How have you overcome any of the three Ps in your life?

2. What resilient people do you admire? Describe how you think they have overcome adversity.

3. What is one area in your life where you show, or want to show, resiliency? What obstacles lie in your path? How will you need to be resilient?

For more information



Connect with Kids

on *Connect with Kids* or *Overcoming the Odds*,
please call (888) 598-KIDS or
email to sales@cwknetwork.com

re·sil·ien·cy (rĭ sĭl' yən sē)

The ability to bounce back from frustrations and to overcome setbacks; the ability to take things in stride.



Overcoming the Odds

This thought-provoking program explores why some children succeed in spite of the tremendous odds against them. What do resilient kids have in common, and what can we learn from their stories about parenting, educating and succeeding?

This special program was produced exclusively for Newark Public Schools by the Emmy® award-winning television and education team at CWK Network, Inc.

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