

## Resilience Age 0 Summary

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### Why Resilience?

As a parent or someone in a parenting role, you play an essential role in your infant's success. There are intentional ways to grow a healthy parent-infant relationship while forming a trusting, loving attachment that will grow resilience and establish foundational life skills in the future.

<b>STEP</b> <b>1</b>	 <b>GET INPUT</b>	<b>Getting to Know and Understand Your Infant's Input</b>
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Consider how the distinct sounds of your infant's cries connect with their body language. It is okay if you are unsure or don't know what your infant is trying to communicate with you. Every infant is unique, and it takes time to learn. Check out these familiar cues and see if they match your infant's feelings and associated needs.

- If infants are uncomfortable, they may issue a less intense, short, whiny cry like “eh, eh, eh.”
- If infants are in pain, their eyes may be closed or open for a second and look blankly in the distance. Parents and those in a parenting role often feel a greater sense of urgency with this cry. They may scrunch up their faces and pull their legs up if it's gas pain.
- If infants are scared, their eyes may remain open, their heads may move backward, they may have a penetrating look and an explosive cry, and they might suddenly extend their legs, arch their back, and then curl up again—an involuntary startle response.
- If infants feel angry, their eyes may be half open and half closed, either in no direction or in a fixed location. Their mouth may be open or half-open. Gestures may accompany crying, and they may arch their back to show they are upset. The intensity gradually increases.
- If infants are hungry, they may produce a cry that resembles anger or discomfort, depending on the intensity. Cries can be short, low-pitched, and rise and fall.
- If infants are tired, they may rub their eyes while they open and close them, pull at their ears, and yawn.

**Tip:** Grow your own resilience by creating a plan for calming down. Research shows that infants cry less when their caregiver is less stressed. Secure your infant's safety, then close your eyes and breathe deeply. Crying creates stress in adults, so take breaks when you need them.

STEP

2



## Teach New Skills

- Use your tone of voice and facial expression to help your infant celebrate when they have overcome a change, such as a new childcare arrangement, sleeping in a new place, or trying new food.
- Model resilience while interacting with your infant. Modeling resilience can be one of the greatest teaching tools.
  - Notice gestures and listen for thoughts and feelings. Attempt to figure out what your infant is trying to tell you through their sounds, gestures, and facial expressions.
  - Infants require your attention to thrive. So, why not build a special time into your routine when you are fully present to listen to what your infant has to tell you? Turn off your phone. Set a timer if needed. Then, notice your body language. Ask yourself, "What is my body communicating, and how am I demonstrating that I'm listening?"
- Ensure daily face-to-face interactions. When face-to-face with a parent or someone in a parenting role, infants increase their sense of security and learn about themselves and their feelings.
  - Talk up close to your infant. Make a point to get down on their level when they are in a high chair, crib, or stroller. Narrate what's going on around you or talk about overcoming a challenge.
  - When encountering new people or situations, get on eye level with your infant and introduce them to those new experiences to help them feel safe.
  - Express love up close. Children need to hear they are loved at every age. Start now and get in the habit of assuring your infant they are loved no matter what.
- Hold your infant close regularly. Infants require close contact with their parents and those in a parenting role. Skin-to-skin contact reduces stress and promotes immunity to disease. Heart rates and feelings sync up when infants are held closely.
  - Rocking in a rocking chair is a soothing way to connect and hold an infant.
  - Baby carriers offer a way to move about with your infant close to your heart.
  - Share the holding. Enlist other trusted family members or friends to share when holding your infant close.

**STEP  
3****Practice to Grow Skills and Develop Habits**

- Your infant will thrive with a predictable daily routine. Calmly managing interruptions to that routine will build resilience. Help your infant learn their daily routine and highlight moments when it will change. *“Tomorrow, Grandma is coming! We will wake up early to meet her at the bus station. It will be dark outside. We will get up early and go.”*
- Retell your story of overcoming a change in routine. *“Do you remember when grandma came early in the morning, and we woke up when it was still dark outside? Waking up early was different for us, and we did it. And now grandma is here!”*
- Narrate your day as you go about your household chores or run errands. This narration fosters a connection with your infant and provides many opportunities to share how to overcome challenges.

**STEP  
4****Support Your Infant’s  
Development and Success**

- Learn about your infant’s development. Each new age presents different challenges, and being informed about your child’s developmental milestones offers guidance on appropriate challenges.
- Recognize effort using “I notice...” statements like: *“I noticed that you could nap in a different room. I love seeing that.”*
- On days with extra challenges, when you can see your infant is scared of new people or situations, offer confidence in your infant’s ability to face the unfamiliar. In a gentle, comforting voice, you can say, *“You tried something like this before, and it was fun. It’s OK to try this.”*
- Actively reflect on how your infant is feeling when approaching challenges. Offering comfort when facing new situations can help your infant gain a sense of security and face them rather than backing away. *“You seem worried; let me hold you so you feel more confident.”*
  - You can also offer comfort items to help your infant face new challenges. *“Would your blanket help you feel better?”* Swaddle your infant, or you may use a pacifier to offer comfort.

**Trap:** Don’t move on quickly if your infant shows interest in trying something new. Infants often need more time to explore new things, and your waiting could make all the difference in whether they can gain skills over time.

STEP  
**5**



## Recognize Efforts

- Recognize small steps along the way. Don't wait for significant accomplishments—like the full bedtime routine going smoothly—to recognize effort. Remember that your recognition can work as a tool to promote more positive behaviors. Find small ways your child is making an effort and let them know you see them.
- Build celebrations into your routine. For example, after getting through your bedtime routine, snuggle and read before bed.

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