RESILIENCE

Resilience refers to psychological hardiness and a person’s ability to deal with life’s knocks and setbacks, both big and small. Resilient children accept life’s disappointments, bounce back quickly from social rejection, persevere when learning doesn’t come easily and generally have a positive attitude to life.

Resilience is a mixture of attitude, skills and abilities and character. Some children are born with a resilient spirit. They are naturally determined and spirited. But resilience is also fostered by early childhood experiences.

Resilient kids have healthy thinking habits. They tend not to catastrophise when things go wrong. They have a sense of optimism about themselves and the future. Some kids are born optimistic but most pick up their optimism from the significant adults in their environment. It pays for parents to be optimistic rather than negative as children will probably pick up their optimism.

Resilient kids are also independent and good problem-solvers. Parents can develop autonomy and resourcefulness by teaching kids the skills of independence and giving them opportunities to resolve some of their own problems. Overprotection robs children of opportunities to develop resilience. Chores and domestic responsibilities, caring for siblings and looking after their own well-being are some ways children can show their capability as family members.

Social competence is an attribute resilient kids have in common. They are able to mix well with others and link with friends when they experience disappointment or some hardship. Parents can develop social skills by interacting with their children, providing opportunities for children to interact with others, and teaching and modelling appropriate social behaviours.