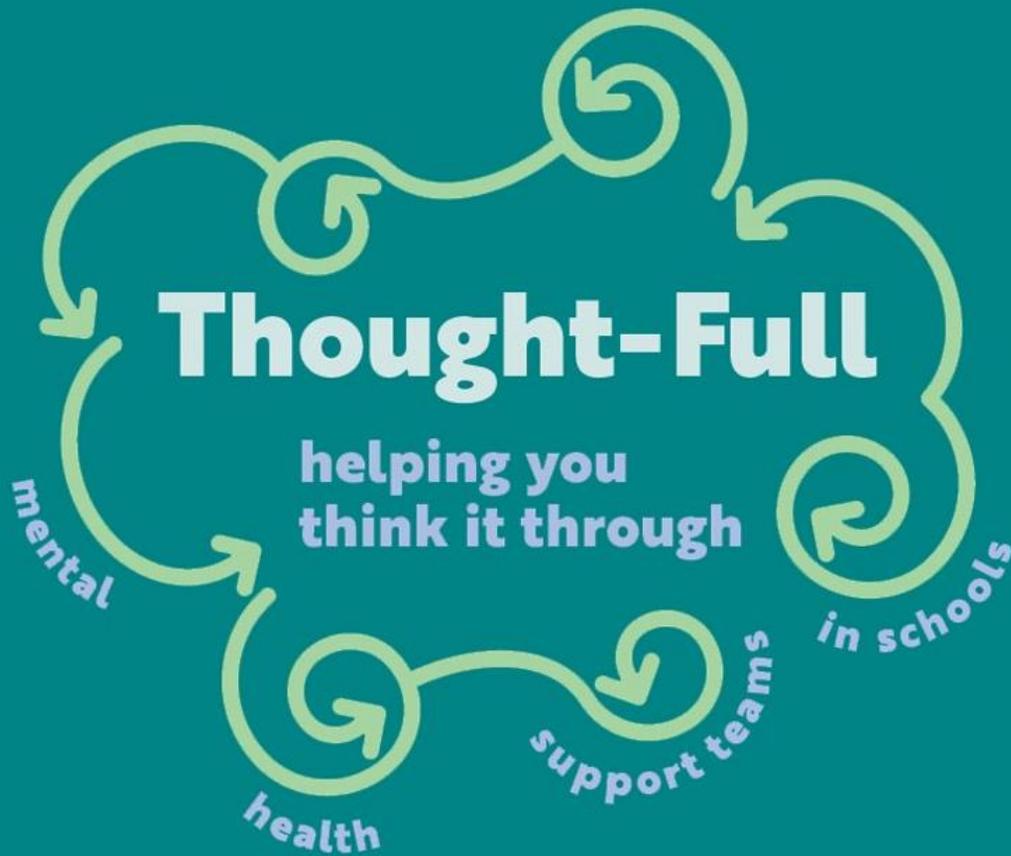


# Supporting your child's resilience at school



... is something we can learn and develop

... is built gradually over time through experiences and challenges

... is linked to improved wellbeing

This booklet outlines seven areas for building your child's

# RESILIENCE



**Building connections**



**Healthy habits**



**Hope / purpose /  
meaning**



**Problem Solving**



**Autonomy / self-  
efficacy**



**Emotion regulation**



**Developing positive  
thinking**

Underpinning all of this, research consistently finds that, in nearly all cases, children cannot build resilience without love, support, and positive relationships, most crucially with their family.

# Building connections



## Encourage your child to engage and connect with their peers

- Play dates
- Use toys to act out social scenarios like sharing or joining in play
- Ask open-ended questions after school – “Who did you play with today:?”
- Practice things they can say to join in at home “Can I play too?”

## Support them to develop their empathy and listening skills

- Read stories together and ask how characters might feel
- Play emotion charades by acting out feelings and guessing them
- Praise good listening: 'I noticed you waited until I finished speaking - thank you!'
- Use feeling words to help your child name emotions: 'You look disappointed. Did you want a turn?’

## Protect quality time with your child where you can model these skills

- Set aside 10-15 minutes daily for uninterrupted play or conversation
- Use family meals to talk about your day and take turns speaking
- Try simple breathing exercises or quiet cuddles to help your child feel calm.
- Narrate your own feelings: 'I'm feeling a bit tired today, so I might need a quiet moment.'

## Develop strong relationships both within your family and with an external support network

- Create small family traditions like bedtime stories or weekend walks
- Encourage regular contact with extended family through calls or visits
- Join local playgroups, school events, or online parenting communities
- Model kindness and respect by resolving conflicts calmly and showing empathy



# Healthy habits



When thinking about any work to develop healthy habits, remember that it is important to encourage children and young people to be actively involved in any planning, and for them to identify any areas they wish to change.

## Healthy Eating

- Talk about food groups in simple ways: fruits, veggies, proteins, dairy, grains, and healthy fats - encourage 'eating the rainbow'.
- Play sorting games with toy foods or pictures: sort into 'every day' and 'sometimes' foods.
- Get them involved in meal prep: washing fruit, stirring, or helping set the table.
- Use storybooks or cartoons to start conversations about healthy eating.
- Model good habits: eat together, try new foods, and speak positively about healthy choices.
- Avoid pressure: encourage tasting, but respect 'no thank you'. Try phrases like 'I'm learning about that taste' or 'I don't like it yet'.
- Offer water as the main drink and keep sugary snacks as occasional treats.
- Join breakfast clubs if available - they support routine and healthy eating.

## Sleep Routine

- Stick to regular bed and wake times, even on weekends.
- Follow a calming bedtime routine: bath, pyjamas, story, cuddle, lights out.
- Create a sleep-friendly space: dim lights, quiet, cool, and no distractions.
- Limit screens before bed: switch to quiet play, drawing, or reading.
- Use a visual bedtime chart to guide the routine.
- Teach calming activities like breathing games ('smell the flower, blow out the candle'), gentle stretches ('starfish stretch', 'teddy bear curl'), and play soft music or white noise.

## Exercise & Movement

- Explore fun activities like dancing, running, climbing, or skipping.
- Try kitchen discos or obstacle courses at home.
- Walk or cycle when you can - make it playful.
- Join clubs or classes if they're interested and available.

## Leisure & Downtime

- Talk about what they enjoy doing to relax - drawing, building, dressing up, etc.
- Support their interests by finding local groups or clubs.
- Encourage hobbies that build confidence and social skills



# Sense of hope, purpose or meaning



## Recognise & celebrate your children's strengths & achievements

- Praise effort, not just results: 'You worked really hard on that drawing!'
- Create a 'Proud Wall' to display artwork and kind notes
- Use a celebration jar to collect achievements and read them together weekly

## Support them to engage with the wider community

- Join local clubs or groups like dance, football, or art
- Attend community events such as fairs or library story times
- Explore places of belonging like churches or community centres
- Model community spirit by speaking positively about local helpers

## Talk to your child about their dream future

- Use imaginative play to explore future ideas.
- Draw their dream life - home, job, or family
- Create bedtime stories where they are the hero (AI can help you!)

## Volunteering

- Do small acts of kindness together, like baking for a neighbour
- Talk about charities in simple terms and let your child choose one to support
- Visit community spaces and explain their purpose
- Model giving and helping others in everyday life

## Give them small responsibilities

- Let them help with daily tasks like setting the table or watering plants
- Create a responsibility chart with stickers or drawings
- Celebrate independence with positive reinforcement
- Let them lead by choosing stories or planning activities



**LITTLE STEPS  
MATTER**

**YOU  
matter**



# Problem Solving



## Help your children to identify problems and say how they feel about them

- Use storybooks or puppets to talk about problems characters face and how they feel
- Ask gently: 'What happened?' and 'How did that make you feel?' to help them name emotions

## Ask questions and show curiosity

- Use open-ended questions like 'What do you think will happen next?'
- Explore together and wonder aloud about things you see or hear

## Give them time to try out solutions without stepping in

- Pause before helping - let them struggle a little with puzzles or tasks
- Say encouraging things like 'I believe you can figure this out.'

## Encourage them to 'have another go' and to explain their thinking

- Use phrases like 'Let's try again together' or 'What made you choose that way?'
- Celebrate effort: 'I love how you didn't give up!'

## Exploring Possible Solutions

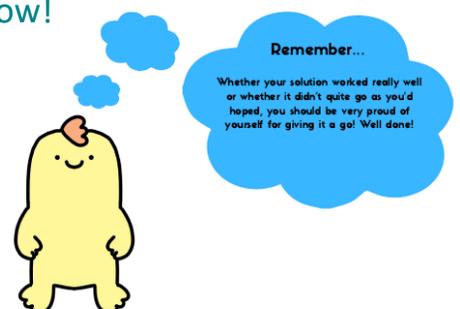
- Ask 'What could we do?' and list their ideas together
- Talk through pros and cons simply: 'If we do this, what might happen?'

## Provide feedback

- Be specific: 'You were really patient while waiting your turn.'
- Focus on what they did well and what they could try next time

## Learning from mistakes

- Share your own mistakes: 'Oops! I forgot the keys. That happens sometimes.'
- Use affirming language: 'Mistakes help our brains grow!'



# Problem Solving

If you're struggling with a practical worry, use this step by step guide which helps to break the problem down and solve it in a more manageable way. Practical worries can feel overwhelming and it's easy to put them off. However, it's much better in the long run to solve the problem today rather than put it off until later.

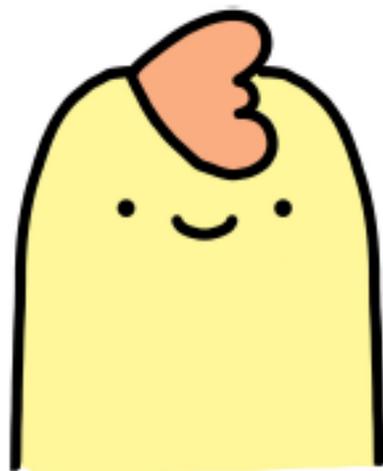
(You'll need some paper and pens/pencils)

- Step 1** Write down your problem in 1 or 2 sentences.
- Step 2** Write down all the ideas you can think of to solve the problem (no matter what they are!).
- Step 3** Make a table and write down ALL of the good things and ALL of the not so good things you can think of for each of your ideas.

	Good things	Not so good things
Idea 1		
Idea 2		

- Step 4** Choose one idea that looks like it could work (if you struggle, see which one has the most good things). Ask yourself, is my idea realistic? If it isn't, choose a different idea.
- Step 5** Make a plan! Write down the answers to these questions to create your plan of action!
- 1) What will you do?
  - 2) When will you do it?
  - 3) How will you do it?
  - 4) Who will you do it with?
  - 5) Could there be any difficulties? If so, what could you do to overcome these?

**Step 6 DO IT!**



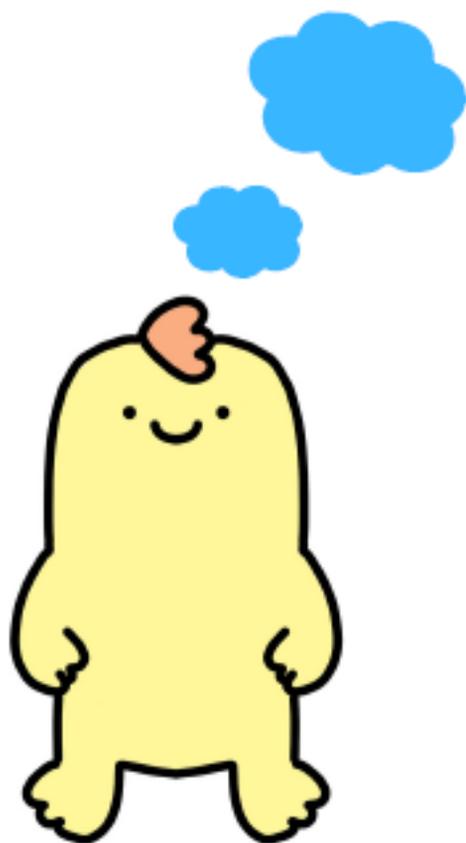
# After you've done it...

Well done for giving your idea a go and for trying to solve your problem! Now, think about how it went.

## Review it

Answer the following questions to help you reflect on how it went.

- 1) Was it helpful?
- 2) Did you achieve what you wanted to?
- 3) If not, could you do something differently/change something next time?
- 4) Did you achieve anything (no matter how small) towards solving your problem? Even tiny steps forward are big achievements.
- 5) What did you learn?



## Remember...

Whether your solution worked really well or whether it didn't quite go as you'd hoped, you should be very proud of yourself for giving it a go! Well done!

# Sense of autonomy or self-efficacy



## Thinking about what you say can really help

- Celebrate small successes: 'You did that all by yourself!'
- Let them make choices: 'Would you like the red pants or the blue ones?'
- Encourage problem-solving: 'What could you try next?'

## Where possible, let them do it themselves

(It may take longer now, but they have to learn at some stage)

- Let them dress themselves, pack their bag, and tidy up after play.
- Encourage them to carry their own belongings
- Encourage them to speak to their teachers, rather than doing it for them
- Use routines to build confidence: morning checklist, bedtime steps, etc.

## Encouraging Responsibility for Belongings

- Use a visual checklist for items like PE kits, water bottles, and homework folders
- Let them pack their own bag with supervision
- Praise responsibility: 'You remembered your book today - great job!'

## Giving Opportunities to Express Ideas

- Ask open-ended questions: 'What do you think we should do today?'
- Let them help plan meals, activities, or family outings.
- Use drawing or storytelling to help them share thoughts and dreams.

## Trying New Things (Even If They Are Tricky)

- Encourage effort: 'It is okay to find it hard at first - keep trying!'
- Break tasks into small steps and celebrate progress.
- Share your own learning experiences and challenges.

## Encouraging Help-Seeking

- Teach phrases like 'Can you help me please?' or 'I am stuck.'
- Praise asking for help: 'That was a smart choice to ask!'
- Model help-seeking by asking others for support yourself

you've  
GOT  
this!



# Emotion regulation



## Recognising and understanding emotions

- Use storybooks or daily experiences to talk about different emotions
- Ask questions like 'How do you feel?' or 'What made you feel that way?'
- Use feelings charts or emotion thermometers to help children label their emotions

## Emotion Coaching (<https://www.emotioncoachinguk.com/>)

- Recognise and validate your child's feelings: 'I can see you're feeling frustrated.'
- Use empathic listening: give full attention and reflect back what they say
- Label emotions clearly: 'That sounds like you're feeling disappointed.'

## Modelling emotional language and strategies

- Talk about your own feelings and how you manage them: 'I'm feeling a bit stressed, so I'm going to take a deep breath.'
- Show different ways to cope: counting to ten, taking a break, or asking for help.

## Reducing stress

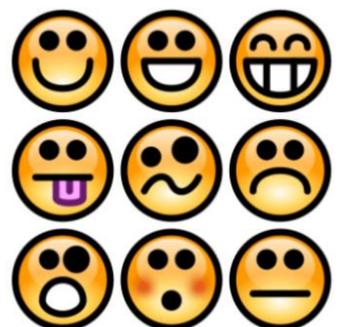
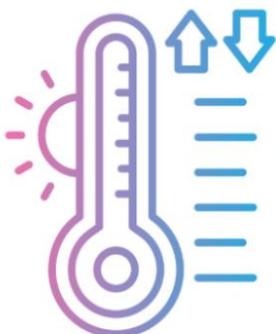
- Limit access to stressful or overwhelming information (e.g. news, adult conversations)
- Create calm spaces at home where your child can relax or take a break.

## Self-calming activities

- Practice deep breathing together: 'Smell the flower, blow out the candle.'
- Try mindfulness or guided meditation apps designed for children.
- Use body scans or gentle stretches to help release tension.

## Other practical ideas

- Use Zones of Regulation visuals to help children identify their emotional state.
- Offer brain breaks: short, fun activities to reset and refocus.
- Include physical or sensory activities like playdough, swinging, or quiet time with a comfort item.



# Developing positive thinking



## What Went Well

- After an activity or event, ask your child: 'What went well today?'
- Focus on small positives like sharing, trying something new, or being kind.
- Use bedtime or mealtimes to reflect together on good moments.

## Gratitude Diaries or '3 Good Things'

- Encourage your child to name three things they are grateful for each day.
- Use drawings or stickers to make it fun and age-appropriate.
- Keep a simple diary or jar where you collect these happy thoughts.

## Solution-Focused Approaches

- Ask your child: 'Can you tell me about a time when you felt okay even though it was hard?'
- Help them notice exceptions to problems and celebrate their coping skills.
- Use gentle prompts to explore what helped them succeed.

## Strengths-Based Approach

- Use strengths-based language: 'I can see you are becoming more confident.'
- Create a 'strengths circle' with family members sharing what they admire in each other.
- Use strengths cards or drawings to help children identify what they are good at

