This article on resilience and coping with life’s ups and downs is relevant to all children, no matter where they are on their journey.

**Why Resilience Matters**

What the experts say: Think back to your childhood and you may recall a mix of memories – you might remember idyllic family holidays by the beach, sadness when a beloved pet died, endless games of backyard cricket with your siblings, worries about school, and homemade birthday cakes. Sound familiar? As adults, we might look back on our childhood as a time when we were carefree and always happy, or we might recall times of upset and worry. We know from our own experiences that life’s ups and downs impact on children too. For children, life’s downs may include emotionally painful experiences like rejection or humiliation at school or after school groups, frustration at not being able to get their own way or sadness when a friend moves away. Good times and bad times are a normal part of life in childhood and adulthood; what’s important is our ability to bounce back from life’s challenges. Helping children develop resilience and build their coping skills means they’re more likely to experience positive emotions, which supports their mental health and wellbeing now and into the future.

**Everybody’s life has ups and downs**

Adults sometimes look back on their childhood as a time when they were always happy, but life’s ups and downs are a part of childhood too. Children need to build resilience skills to be able to both enjoy good times and deal with hard times. Helping children learn how to manage life’s ups and downs and build their coping skills supports their mental health and wellbeing now and into the future.

**Feeling good protects mental health and wellbeing**

Did you know that experiencing positive emotions such as joy, pleasure and having fun are essential experiences for building and maintaining a healthy mind across our whole lives?

Skills and qualities that help children cope with life’s ups and downs are:

- **Trust** - that the world is safe and that there are caring people to help them.
- **Belief** - in their ability to do things for themselves and achieve their goals.
- **Feeling good** - about themselves and feeling valued for who they are by their parents and carers.
- **Optimism** - that things generally turn out well.
- **Ability to manage** their feelings, thoughts and behaviours.

Children develop these skills and qualities over time, initially through their experiences in coping with small stresses with help from supportive adults. When bigger stresses come along, even though at first they might feel quite distressed, children can draw on what they have learned about helping themselves to cope and feel better. Looking to others for support continues to be an effective way of coping.
How are your child’s resilience skills developing?

Resilience is the ability to cope with life’s ups and downs. Children’s resilience is enhanced when they:

- are loved by someone unconditionally
- have an older person outside the home they can talk to about problems and feelings
- are praised for doing things on their own and striving to achieve
- can count on their family being there when needed
- know someone they want to be like
- believe things will turn out all right
- have a sense of a power greater than themselves
- are willing to try new things
- feel that what they do makes a difference in how things turn out
- like themselves
- can focus on a task and stay with it
- have a sense of humour
- make goals and plans, both short and longer term.

*Adapted from the International Resilience Project: http://resilnet.uiuc.edu/library/grotb97a.html

Feeling optimistic and hopeful are key parts of mental health and wellbeing

If you would like to learn more about bucket filling, visit the Bucket Fillers website. www.bucketfillers101.com
Bucket Fillers offer a free weekly e-newsletter for parents and teachers.

This resource is part of a range of KidsMatter Primary resources. The link below is to the KidsMatter enewsletter where you will find a number of other useful resources.
Just press control click.

https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/families/enewsletter