

30 Days of Resilience

Welcome to the 30-day Resilience Challenge! I hope that you will find these activities to be thought-provoking, engaging, and effective. 2020 has been a year unlike any other, to say the least. And I know that the families of PPOS have worked hard, and sacrificed much in order to support their students through this period of distance learning. Because of this, it is not my intention to put excess strain on you all with these activities. They should be relatively short and sweet. This is just for you and your kiddo- I encourage you to take the focus off of perfection and find what will work best for your family. Whether you do these once a week, four times a week, or every single day, you are building your relationship with your child and helping support their social and emotional development. And for that, they will appreciate you.

Happy holidays,

Madi Neukirch, SEL Advisor

The Challenge!

Day 1. As a household, sit down together and name 3 things that you are grateful for. One big thing, one little thing, and one thing about yourself.

Day 2. Go for a walk together, no matter the weather. If it's cold, bundle up. It doesn't have to be long, but take time to appreciate being outdoors. Is the snow glittering? Is the wind blowing on your face making you feel alive? Share those feelings with your kid and invite them to do the same.

Day 3. Call an extended family member or friend on the phone, or video call. Make sure to tell that person what they mean to you, and have your child do the same/ do it with you.

Day 4. Talk to your child about their support system. Help them identify trusted adults in their family, school, and community that they can talk to when times are tough. Don't forget to let them know that they can always come to you.

Day 5. Talk to your child about strengths. What are their strengths? What are yours? What areas could you stand to grow in?

Day 6. Do something as a household that's out of the ordinary. It could be cooking a new recipe as a household, going somewhere you haven't been before, or watching a new movie together.

Day 7. Mindful eating. During a meal, ask your child: What does your food taste like? Do you enjoy it? Was there enough? How did that food make you feel? What kinds of foods give you energy? Did this meal give you energy or take it away?

Day 8. Make a hydration goal with your child and stick to it. How many liters of water will you drink today?

Day 9. Write a letter or postcard to a friend you haven't seen in awhile. Invite your child to do the same.

Day 10. Talk to your child about joy. What is it? What makes them feel joy? What makes you feel joy? Does joy come from big things or small things? How can we get more joy into our daily lives?

Day 11. Discuss a difficult situation in your life that you needed to be resilient, and how you worked through it. Then invite your child to share an experience of theirs. What would you have done differently?

Day 12. Talk to your kid about the COVID-19 pandemic. How are they feeling about it? What has been the hardest part? Are there any silver linings? Where can you offer them your support and how can they help support you? What are they looking forward to most in the coming year? We all have our own opinions. Really get them to reflect on how *they* think and feel.

Day 13. Sit quietly outside or inside and do a sound map with your child. Close our eyes for 3 minutes and take stock of all the things you hear. Then, open them and either (a) write down all the sounds you heard, or draw them out. If you really want to get into it, draw while your eyes are closed. Get creative!

Day 14. Talk to your child about boundaries. Boundaries for yourself, your relationships, your time, your work etc. Do you not answer emails after working hours? That's a boundary. Do you need time to cool off after an argument? Boundary. Do you not spend time with people who don't respect your time? Boundary. What boundaries does your child have, and how can you respect them (within reason)? Agree on what you can, and make sure that your kid knows if and why you can't adhere to one.

Day 15. Share your greatest challenge and your greatest hope for the week as a household.

Day 16. Discuss what your purpose in life is, and then invite your child to share theirs. Ask them how they can stay true to that purpose. Let them know it's okay for that purpose to change throughout their life.

Day 17. Help your kid compose a nice email or card for a teacher, religious leader or other adult in their life who is not family. Help them express their gratitude as specifically as possible.

Day 18. Positive affirmations. Ask your child to name the three best things about themselves. If they struggle with this, share what you think their best three qualities are. Together, write or draw those things and display it somewhere they see every day. Do the same for yourself.

Day 19. Share with your child some strategies that you use to cope with hard emotions. Help them to come up with some strategies of their own. Do you take some alone time? Do you pet a dog or cat? Punch a pillow? Watch a funny video?

Day 20. Mindful breathing. Together, take a breath in for a count of 4, hold for 4, breathe out for 4, and hold for 4. Do this for several rounds. This is called square breathing.

Day 21. Self-care. What do we do to take care of bodies and our minds every day? What can we do for ourselves when we are having an especially tough time? Decide on one self-care activity to do and then do it.

Day 22. Mission: Catch your kid being good as much as possible and let them know that you notice. Keep track of how many times you can praise them for doing appropriate, helpful, kind or responsible behaviors. How does that change your lens?

Day 23. Play a game together. Outside or inside. Structured, or imaginary. Play is great for kids and adults.

Day 24. Make a Sunshine Journal for your household. Each person writes down 3-5 things that other people can do to help them feel better when they are down. Each person decorates their page however they want, and they become a journal that someone can open if they see a household member feeling bad.

Day 25. Together with your child, make a goal for today, this week, this month and this year (depending on your kid's age, shorter timelines might make more sense). It can be anything. Come up with ways to make sure that you are keeping up with your goals. Make sure to write them down so you and your kiddo can remember them!

Day 26. Rest with intention. Set aside part of your day, and plan what you will do to relax and rest. Set yourself up for success. It might be 10 minutes, it might be 10 hours. Invite your child to do the same ("rest" doesn't have to mean sleep! It can mean relaxing, in any way that makes the most sense to you and your kiddo)

Day 27. Do a kindness "Secret Santa." Every person draws a name, and should do as many kind (secret) things for that person within a given time frame. At the end, guess who it was! If your household has two people in it, the guessing part will be easy.

Day 28. Reflect on a mistake you have made as a parent, with your child. Let them know you are sorry for that mistake, and share what you learned, and how you will improve in the future.

Invite them to share a time when they have made a mistake as your child, and help them to reflect on it. How did they learn from it? How will it change their behavior going forward?

Day 29. Discuss things that you struggle with about yourself. Invite your child to do the same. Together, practice reframing your negative self-talk into neutral/positive self talk. (“I’m stupid→ I work hard, but sometimes I need more clarity on my school assignments to understand them.”)

Day 30. Talk about what you learned during these activities, however many you did. Invite your child to do the same. What is resilience to you? What was the most fun part? What was the most challenging? How will you continue to build your resilience moving forward?

Some tips!

- Make sure that you are really considering your kid’s point of view. Oftentimes, adults are quick to dismiss a child’s thought or opinion, because they don’t have a lot of life experience to base it off of. But what your kid says is their reality. Help them think through it, instead of dismissing it.
- Ask tons of questions, and avoid lecturing. Sharing your perspective is awesome, but when it turns into a lecture, you’re no longer having a conversation. For example, instead of explaining why it’s important to respect their teachers, ask: “What do you think teachers do to become teachers?” “That sounds like a long process. Do you think you would be proud of that accomplishment?” “Now, how would it feel if you went through all of that, and your students said XYZ in class? Do you think that’s fair?” “What does respect look like?”
- Be gentle with yourself! We all mess up sometimes. If something doesn’t go perfectly, or you mess up, or you say something hurtful, one of the biggest lessons you can teach your child is taking accountability, and apologizing.