ATTACHMENT/RELATIONSHIPS

Attachment/Relationships refers to the ongoing, emotional connection the child builds over time with a familiar adult through nurturing interaction.

Use a gentle voice.
Speak calmly and gently to your infant or toddler throughout the day, and avoid using a loud or abrupt voice that can startle a young child. Children listen and learn about how to communicate with others from hearing our tone and words. Model kindness and patience in your voice.

Provide safety and security.
Gently touch or pick up your infant or toddler in the presence of unfamiliar adults to reassure her that she is safe. Stay close by as she plays and explores. Your child looks to you for reassurance. When you respond with a smile or a nod or by picking her up when needed, she learns you are reliable and trustworthy. In the future, this will help her to trust and care for others in her life, such as a pet, a sibling, or a friend.

Redirect.
Gently guide your infant or toddler to a better choice when needed. Little ones often need redirection for their own safety. If an infant or toddler is moving toward something in the environment that is not safe, adults should remove the item or redirect the child to something more interesting. Infants and toddlers are curious. They seek to touch, taste, and small almost everything! Keeping the environment safe is an important job.
Activities to Promote Resilience in Infants & Toddlers

INITIATIVE

Initiative is the child’s ability to use independent thought and action to meet his or her needs.

**Show your joy.**
Show pleasure in your child’s accomplishments by smiling, clapping your hands, and getting down to her level. “Wow, Joselyn, you scooted all the way to the toy. Way to go!” Celebrating her efforts helps a child learn to take things step by step.

**Provide help as needed.**
Offer help just until your child can do it on his own. You might move a toy closer as your infant learns to reach and grasp. You might turn a puzzle piece to face the right direction but let your toddler put it in place. Completing the challenging task will make him eager to try again next time. Asking too little or too much can lead to boredom or frustration.

**Have family time.**
For example, you may do some of the following:
- Eat breakfast together every day
- Read stories every night before bedtime
- Go out for a walk every Saturday morning

Having regular family routines and activities helps children participate. Knowing what comes next helps children be prepared and take an active role in the family fun.

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Activities to Promote Resilience in Toddlers

SELF-REGULATION

Self-Regulation is a child’s ability to gain control of bodily functions, manage powerful emotions, and maintain focus and attention (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

Accept mistakes.
Children make mistakes. Adults make mistakes. It is how we all learn and grow!
Talk through mistakes with children:
“Andrew, you pulled yourself up and plopped back down. Let’s try again!” or “Paula, your juice spilled. Let’s get some paper towels to wipe it up.”

Offer calm guidance.
Remain calm and supportive during your toddler’s struggles with independence: “Karina, you want to take your animals for a ride in the wagon. We need to keep the wagon on the sidewalk.” Then, comment when your toddler follows limits: “Karina, you remembered to keep the wagon on the sidewalk when you walked your animals. Thank you.”

Watch, wonder, and respond.
Listen and watch for the ways your child tells you he is hungry, tired, bored, wet, and so on. This will help you know how to respond. “Oh, Joshua, you sound tired. Let me hold you for a while.” As you child grows, he will learn to notice the signs in himself and will be able to get a snack, engage in a fun activity, or go to sleep when he is tired.

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Activities to Promote Resilience in Preschoolers

ATTACHMENT/RELATIONSHIPS

Attachment/Relationships refers to a child’s ability to promote and maintain mutual, positive connections with other children and significant adults.

Help your child make and keep friends.
Children do not always know how to play with others. Provide help by suggesting words to use. “Ellen, you could say, ‘May I have a turn?’”

Hug and cuddle together.
Safe, loving touch can help you to build a bond with your child. When your child runs to you for a hug and you respond, it tells him that you think he is important. This can then help children cope with outside experiences like going to school for the first time, making new friends, or getting through a conflict. Try giving your child warm hugs throughout the day. You can also connect with a gentle pat on the back, holding hands, or smiling at each other.

Talk with your child about things she does well.
We all like to hear about something we have done well. Children also like to hear about their strengths. Try telling your child each day about several things you saw or heard him do that were positive. “Milo, you picked Abuela’s purse for her. That was thoughtful. Did you see her big smile?”

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Initiative is a child’s ability to use independent thought and action to meet his or her needs.

**Involve your child in doing simple daily tasks.**

Preschoolers can help set the table, make a bed, sort and fold laundry, or tear lettuce for a salad. Make sure that the task is one your child can do. For example, rather than expecting her to make the whole bed, let her tuck in the sheets or put the pillows on the bed.

**Have fun together every day.**

For example, take turns pushing each other on the swings at the park. Turn ordinary events into opportunities for fun, such as talking about favorite foods at the grocery store. Play games or sing songs in the car/bus or whenever your child has to wait. Play like you are four years old again! Your child will notice!

**Find out what is special about your child.**

Each child is special in his own way. Comment on his strengths: “Jackson, you tell silly jokes that make me laugh!”

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Self-Regulation is a child’s ability to express emotions and manage behaviors in healthy ways.

**Talk about it later.**
If your child acts out by having a tantrum, crying loudly, kicking, or throwing toys, wait until he is calm and then talk. Together, come up with ways your child can cope the next time he is upset.

“Ashton, you kicked your sister when she took your cars. It’s not okay to hurt her. Next time, you could give her some cars to use. Or maybe you have another idea.”

**Practice taking turns**
For example, play catch or simple board games, and build in taking turns as part of family life. You could pass food around the table at mealtimes or have your children take turns choosing a book to read at bedtime.

**Use warnings to help your child get ready for change.**
Some children have a hard time going from one thing to the next, for example, from play time to lunch. Try giving a warning.

“In five minutes, we need to get ready for lunch.”

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**Activities to Promote Resilience in Preschoolers**

**SELF-REGULATION**

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Activities to Promote Resilience in School-Age Children

DCRC’s School-Age Initiative focuses on promoting the social–emotional health and well-being of children in grades K-8th grade. As with academic learning standards, states and schools are increasingly being required to meet social and emotional learning (SEL) standards. In response, The Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA; LeBuffe, Shapiro, & Naglieri, 2009) was developed primarily to measure social-emotional skills in school-age children, in addition to promoting a strength-based approach to SEL.

This packet contains easy-to-use activities that focus on strengthening the following protective factors for youth:

1. Self-Awareness
2. Self-Management
3. Social Awareness
4. Relationship Skills
5. Goal-Directed Behavior
6. Decision Making
7. Personal Responsibility
8. Optimistic Thinking

These activities were written for classrooms but can be adapted to out-of-school time and other settings.

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**Activities to Promote Resilience Through SELF-AWARENESS**

*Self-Awareness* is defined as a child’s realistic understanding of her/his strengths and limitations and consistent desire for self-improvement.

**Feelings Check-In**
Conduct a feelings check-in 3-4 times a day to give students a chance to reflect on how they are feeling at that time and why. Explicitly having students recognize their feelings will help build their own understanding of Self-Awareness.

**All About Me Collage**
Use pictures, words, or symbols clipped from magazines that represent things students own, enjoy doing, places they’ve been, people they admire, or careers they desire. Students create a collage to represent themselves that can be displayed in the classroom.

**Ranking Traits**
Have students write 10 traits (positive or negative) on separate strips of paper about themselves. Ask students to rank the traits from what they feel is most important to least. After students have ranked, they can write a reflection about why these traits are important to who they are.

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Activities to Promote Resilience Through SELF-MANAGEMENT

Self-Management refers to a child’s success in controlling his/her emotions and behaviors to complete a task or succeed in a new or challenging situation.

Being Buggy
For primary grades, print off a picture of a bug. Older students should start by drawing a picture of a bug. Have the students write things that they do that may bother other students on the printed or drawn bug picture. Students may keep this in a folder to refer back to as necessary. The students may also make a pledge and plan to themselves that they will try to stop the behavior and what they will do to not do it anymore.

Checklist Systems
Some students have trouble completing tasks because they may be overwhelmed by too much information being presented at one time. Try breaking down tasks for these students in a step by step checklist. Primary grade students may need a pre-made checklist with each step needed to complete a task, but intermediate grades can be encouraged to write their own checklist as the teacher is giving directions for an assignment. This may help students manage their behavior and emotions because they can read and physically check off when a step is completed.

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Activities to Promote Resilience Through SOCIAL AWARENESS

**Social Awareness** refers to a child’s ability to interact with others in a way that shows respect for their ideas or behaviors, recognizes her/his impact on them and uses cooperation and tolerance in social situations.

**Team-Based Games**

When reviewing for a test, or practicing a new skill, turn questions into a game format. Students can be put in teams and instructed to work together in order to come up with an answer to the question or problem. Before beginning the game, explain to students that they will need to cooperate in order to figure out the final answer. You can also add a bonus point for the team that works together best on each question. This will ensure those positive interactions are being recognized as well as the academic content of the game. Award a team winner based on correct answers, as well as the team who has the most points for working effectively as a team. This is a great way for students to experience authentic relationship skill building.

**Random Acts of Kindness Poster**

Create a Random Acts of Kindness Poster for your classroom. Explain to students that a random act of kindness refers to a positive action done for them or to them unexpectedly. If students experience a positive interaction with a classmate they can add it to the poster. Younger students can draw a picture and explain it to the class. At the end of each week read over the poster with the class and recognize these positive interactions between students!

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Activities to Promote Resilience Through RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

**Relationship Skills** are defined as a child’s consistent performance of socially acceptable actions that promote and maintain positive connections with others.

**Compliment Hearts**
Complimenting is a simple way to encourage students to form positive relationships as well as foster self-esteem. For the month of February, challenge students to compliment one of their peers every day. Older grades can be challenged to compliment a different person everyday to give students a chance to give and receive a compliment from someone they might not normally interact with. Students can write compliments on construction paper hearts. Place blank hearts somewhere in the classroom for students to access and set aside specific times for them to use them. After students write a compliment they can give it directly to their classmate, place it in a mailbox, or they can be collected and shared at the end of the week. At the end of the month discuss with the class how giving and receiving compliments felt. This can be continued all year with a different theme each month; shamrocks, flowers, etc.

**Peer Scavenger Hunt**
Sometimes students need a fresh start mid-way through the school year. Take time to reenergize relationships by having a peer scavenger hunt. Create a worksheet with a list of 10-15 statements, such as “lived in a different state” or “favorite flavor of ice cream is chocolate”, etc. Provide a copy of the sheet to every student in the class. Instruct students to go on a “scavenger hunt” around the classroom to find a classmate that fits each statement. This is a fun way to get students up and moving as well as discover some different information about their peers!

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Activities to Promote Resilience Through GOAL-DIRECTED BEHAVIOR

Goal-Directed Behavior is a child’s initiative of, and persistence in completing, tasks of varying difficulty.

Marble Reward System
This strategy can be modified as you see fit for your classroom, but the general idea is that your class will decide on one goal that they want to try and meet in a given time frame. For example, as a class you and your students decide that everyone is going to work on completing their homework every night. Each day that this happens, a student can add a marble to a jar. Once the jar is full, celebrate students’ successes. This activity can be done as a whole class, in small groups where each group comes up with a goal they are trying to reach, or for an individual student who seems to be struggling in a certain area.

Praise
Hearing “good work” or “I can see you tried really hard on this test” can go a long way. Take time to pay attention when a student succeeds and praise them. This can be done verbally or in a note that is sent home so it can be shared with family members. Encourage students to praise their peers when they see them working towards a goal and succeeding! Remember to make your praise specific, and focus on the effort, not just the outcome.

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Activities to Promote Resilience Through DECISION MAKING

Decision Making is a child’s approach to problem solving that involves learning from others and from her or his previous experiences, using her or his values to guide her or his actions and accepting responsibility for her or his decisions.

Give Students Options

An easy way to encourage Decision Making is to give them options for academic assignments. This can be as simple as offering a choice of different assignments that all meet the same standards (write a paper, or perform a skit) or giving choices over which problems to complete for homework. By providing options for completing assignments, students will learn how to identify which option is best for them, as well as feel the independence of making a choice.

Advice Columnist

This can be done using a guided reading, novel study, or independent reading book where a character is having a problem. In younger grades teachers might identify the problem for students. Older students can identify the problem a specific character is having and then ask students to write a letter giving that character advice on how to solve the problem and explain why their solution would work.

Role Model

Ask students to identify a positive role model in their lives. Then, have them write a letter to this person explaining why they are their role model. By identifying the positive traits that they want to uphold, students gain experience in understanding what they value and how this guides their actions.

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Activities to Promote Resilience Through PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Personal Responsibility** is a child’s tendency to be careful and reliable in his/her actions and in contributing to group efforts.

**Jenga**
Explain that the game Jenga is exactly like working in a group. You must work together like the wooden blocks to stay strong, as soon as you stop working with or pulling away from the group, just as you pull away the wooden blocks from the tower, it becomes weak and may fall apart. You may also write different emotions on the blocks, and each time they pull out a block they must discuss a time they felt that emotion.

**The Bag**
One student from the class is given a brown paper bag with an object inside. That student, Student A, is instructed to look inside and remain completely quiet about what he/she saw. Remaining students will ask and record a series of self-produced YES/NO questions to Student A. Student A may only give a thumbs up (YES) or thumbs down (NO) to answer the questions. The goal is for the group of students to guess what is in the bag based Student A’s clues.

**Goal Setting**
Give students a blank piece of paper. Ask students to write a goal they have, how can they achieve their goal, and one strength and one weakness they will need to overcome to reach that goal.

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Activities to Promote Resilience Through OPTIMISTIC THINKING

Optimistic Thinking is a student’s attitude of confidence, hopefulness, and positive thinking regarding herself/himself and her/his life situations in the past, present and future.

Positive Self-Phrases
Talk to students about how we all have things that we are good at and things we aren’t as good at and that’s what makes us unique! Ask students to reflect on one academic and one behavioral trait they really like about themselves. On a small piece of paper have students write these traits and tape them to their desk. When they are feeling defeated or unsure of themselves remind them to look at their positive self-phrases to help themselves think more positively about their strengths.

Optimistic Advice Collage
This can be a helpful activity to do prior to PSSA’s. Discuss with students that sometimes when we feel stressed or overwhelmed we say phrases in our head to keep ourselves going and to think positively. Ask students to think about a phrase they’ve said to themselves or heard somebody else say, (such as “Keep trying!” “You can do it!” “Believe in yourself!”) and write it on a sheet of paper. Allow students to be creative and use markers and other supplies to make their phrase decorative. After each student has created a phrase they can put them together on a large poster board to create an Optimistic Advice Collage. The collage can be displayed in the classroom for students to see daily!

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