


Helping children build resilience through **PLAY**

We asked Canadian doctors and nurses with emergency department experience about their thoughts on child play and resilience. This is what they had to say!




Resilience is what gives my child the mental strength to be able to push past challenges and find solutions for herself.
— Martha

What is **resilience**?


- Learning to cope with failure
- Overcoming fear
- Facing stress and uncertainty
- Building self-confidence
- Being more independent
- Developing distress tolerance
- Regulating negative emotions

What does resilience look like during play?

- Falling from a bike and getting back on even with scraped knees
- Overcoming nervousness while climbing higher on playground equipment without adult help
- Playing Tag with friends in unfamiliar environments while learning where to step without tripping



If my child is going to play on a swing and fall off, I can't really prevent that. That's something that my child has to experience on their own.
— Kelly



I think having an obstacle that you have to overcome helps them build resilience. When they finally succeed, they learn to overcome a challenge.
— Perry

How can I help my child build resilience?

- **Sit on your hands!**
You can watch and see how your child handles challenging tasks without intervening right away.
- **Ask your child how they want you to help!**
Your child can tell you what makes *them* feel safe and happy during play, which lets you know what works for them.
- **Make environments safe AND exciting for them!**
You can encourage risk-taking and the use of safety equipment and strategies to avoid potential dangers, such as cars.