



# Resource Family Connection

News, Events, and Information Benefiting  
the Children of Waukesha County  
July and August, 2017



## Building Resilience in Children - 20 Practical, Powerful Strategies, Part 1

By: Karen Young

All children are capable of extraordinary things. There is no happiness gene, no success gene, and no 'doer of extraordinary things' gene. The potential for happiness and greatness lies in all of them, and will mean different things to different kids. We can't change that they will face challenges along the way. What we can do is give them the skills so these challenges are never able to break them. We can build their resilience.

Resilience is being able to bounce back from stress, challenge, tragedy, trauma or adversity. When children are resilient, they are braver, more curious, more adaptable, and more able to extend their reach into the world.

The great news is that resilience is something that can be nurtured in all children.

### Resilience and the brain. Here's what you need to know.

During times of stress or adversity, the body goes through a number of changes designed to make us faster, stronger, more alert, more capable versions of ourselves. Our heart rate increases, blood pressure goes up, and adrenaline and cortisol (the stress hormone) surge through the body. In the short-term, this is brilliant, but the changes were only ever meant to be for the short-term. Here's what happens ...

The stress response is initiated by the amygdala, the part of the brain responsible for our instinctive, impulsive responses. From there, messages are sent to the brain to release its chemical cocktail (including adrenaline and cortisol) to help the body deal with the stress. When the stress is ongoing, the physiological changes stay switched on. Over an extended period of time, they can weaken the immune system (which is why students often get sick during exams), the body and the brain.

Stress can also cause the prefrontal cortex at the front of the brain to temporarily shut down. The prefrontal cortex is the control tower of the brain. It is involved in attention, problem solving, impulse control, and regulating emotion. These are known as 'executive functions'. Sometimes not having too much involvement from the pre-frontal cortex can be a good thing – there are times we just need to get the job done without pausing to reflect, plan or contemplate (such as crying out in pain to bring help fast, or powering through an all-nighter). Then there are the other times.

Resilience is related to the capacity to activate the prefrontal cortex and calm the amygdala. When this happens, the physiological changes that are activated by stress start to reverse, expanding the capacity to recovering from, adapt to, or find a solution to stress, challenge or adversity.

### How does resilience affect behaviour?

Children will have different levels of resilience and different ways of responding to and recovering from stressful times. They will also have different ways of showing when the demands that are being put upon them outweigh their capacity to cope. They might become emotional, they might withdraw, or they might become defiant, angry or resentful. Of course, even the most resilient of warriors have days

where it all gets too much, but low resilience will likely drive certain patterns of behaviour more often.

### Can resilience be changed?

Yes. Yes. Yes. Absolutely resilience can be changed. Resilience is not for the genetically blessed and can be strengthened at any age. One of the most exciting findings in the last decade or so is that we can change the wiring of the brain through the experiences we expose it to. The right experiences can shape the individual, intrinsic characteristics of a child in a way that will build their resilience.

### Now for the how. Building resilience in children.

Building small humans into healthy, thriving big ones isn't about clearing adversity out of their way. Of course, if we could scoop them up and lift them over the things that would cause them to stumble, that would be a wonderful thing, but it wouldn't necessarily be doing them any favours. A little bit of stress is life-giving and helps them to develop the skills they need to flourish. Strengthening them towards healthy living is about nurturing within them the strategies to deal with that adversity. Here's how.

#### 1. Resilience needs relationships, not uncompromising independence.

Research tells us that it's not rugged self-reliance, determination or inner strength that leads kids through adversity, but the reliable presence of at least one supportive relationship. In the context of a loving relationship with a caring adult, children have the opportunity to develop vital coping skills. The presence of a responsive adult can also help to reverse the physiological changes that are activated by stress. This will ensure that the developing brain, body and immune system are protected from the damaging effects of these physiological changes. Anyone in the life of a child can make a difference – family, teachers, coaches – anyone.

#### 2. Increase their exposure to people who care about them.

Social support is associated with higher positive emotions, a sense of personal control and predictability, self-esteem, motivation, optimism, a resilience. Kids won't always notice the people who are in their corner cheering them on, so when you can, let them know about the people in their fan club. Anything you can do to build their connection with the people who love them will strengthen them.

*'I told Grandma how brave you were. She's so proud of you.'*

#### 3. Let them know that it's okay to ask for help.

Children will often have the idea that being brave is about dealing with things by themselves. Let them know that being brave and strong means knowing when to ask for help. If there is anything they can do themselves, guide them towards that but resist carrying them there.

Continued on Page 2

## Building Resilience in Children - 20 Practical, Powerful Strategies, Part 1

Continued from Page 1

### 4. Build their executive functioning.

Strengthening their executive functioning will strengthen the prefrontal cortex. This will help them manage their own behaviour and feelings, and increase their capacity to develop coping strategies. Some powerful ways to build their executive functioning are:

- establishing routines;
- modelling healthy social behaviour;
- creating and maintaining supportive reliable relationships around them;
- providing opportunities for their own social connections;
- creative play;
- board games (good for impulse control (taking turns), planning, working memory, and mental flexibility (the ability to shift thoughts to an alternative, better pattern of thought if the situation requires));
- games that involve memory (e.g. the shopping game – 'I went shopping and I bought a [puppy]'; the next person says, 'I went shopping and I bought a [puppy and a bike for my t-rex]'; next person ... 'I went shopping and I bought [a puppy, a bike for my t-rex and a hot air balloon] – the winner is the last one standing who doesn't forget something on the shopping list;
- exercise;
- giving them opportunities to think and act independently (if they disagree with you and tell you why you're wrong, there's a plus side – their executive functioning is flourishing!);
- providing opportunities for them to make their own decisions.

### 5. Encourage a regular mindfulness practice.

Mindfulness creates structural and functional changes in the brain that support a healthy response to stress. It strengthens the calming, rational prefrontal cortex and reduces activity in the instinctive, impulsive amygdala. It also strengthens the connections between the prefrontal cortex and the amygdala. When this connection is strong, the calming prefrontal cortex will have more of a hand in decisions and behaviour.

### 6. Exercise.

Exercise strengthens and reorganises the brain to make it more resilient to stress. One of the ways it does this is by increasing the neurochemicals that can calm the brain in times of stress. Anything that gets kids moving is stellar, but of course, if you can make it fun that pretty much grants you hero status. Here are some ideas, but get them thinking and they'll have plenty of their own:

- throw a frisbee;
- kick a ball;
- give a hula-hoop a spin;
- dance stars;
- walk the dog;
- superhero tag (the tagged one stands in the middle of a circle on the ground, a superhero saves them by using their superhero powers to fly with running feet through the circle); detective (in the park or backyard ... first one to find five things that are green; or five things starting with 's'; or seven things that could be used for dress-ups; or ten things that smell gorgeous – ready, set, go!).

### 7. Build feelings of competence and a sense of mastery.

Nurture that feeling in them – that one that reminds them they can do hard things. You'll be doing this every time you acknowledge their strengths, the brave things they do, their effort when they do something difficult; and when you encourage them to make their own decisions. When they have a sense of mastery, they are less likely to be reactive to future

stress and more likely to handle future challenges.

*'You're a superstar when it comes to trying hard things. You've got what it takes. Keep going. You'll get there.'*

### 8. Nurture optimism.

Optimism has been found to be one of the key characteristics of resilient people. The brain can be rewired to be more optimistic through the experiences it is exposed to. If you have a small human who tends to look at the glass as being half empty, show them a different view. This doesn't mean invalidating how they feel. Acknowledge their view of the world, and introduce them to a different one.

*'It's disappointing when it rains on a sports day isn't it. Let's make the most of this. What's something we can do on a rainy day that we probably wouldn't do if it was sunny?'* The idea is to focus on what is left, rather than what has been lost.

See Part 2 of this article in the September/October Resource Family Connection Newsletter!

### Senior Pictures



Do you know of a young adult in care who will be starting his or her senior year of high school in the fall? Have they gotten or planned for their senior pictures yet? Did you know the Coalition offers FREE senior pictures to youth in out-of-home care who are getting ready to graduate? Senior pictures are important to all youth! Unfortunately, youth in foster care are not always able to enjoy this experience with their friends and classmates. The Coalition for Children, Youth, and Families can help. For more information, e-mail Jenna at [iczaplewski@coalitionforcyf.org](mailto:iczaplewski@coalitionforcyf.org).

### Foster Care Recruitment Efforts

In an effort to raise awareness for the need of additional foster parents in Waukesha County, we are taking our show on the road! We are participating in several different outdoor events. Our booth includes information on how to become a foster parent, frequently asked questions, steps to become a foster parent, and promotional items. We are currently scheduled for the following outdoor events in July and August:

- July 8 - Waukesha Farmers Market
- August 3 - Muskego National Night Out
- August 4 - Jammin On Janesville in Muskego
- August 12 - Waukesha Farmers Market

A big thank you to foster parent, Shari Rens, who helped out at the Jammin on Janesville event in June! If you know of other outdoor events where we can have a booth, or you are interested in helping at one of the booths, please contact Libby Sinclair at [esinclair@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:esinclair@waukeshacounty.gov).



We also gave presentations in June at the Delafield and Muskego libraries! We have a PowerPoint presentation, followed by a question and answer session. If you would like to host an event, please let Libby know.



## 4th of July Events!

- ☉ Brookfield (Town) Parade - July 4 at 9:00 a.m.
- ☉ Brookfield (City) Parade - July 4 at 10:00 a.m.
- ☉ Brookfield Family Fest - July 4 at 6:00 p.m.
- ☉ Brookfield Fireworks - July 4 at 9:17 p.m.
- ☉ Delafield Parade - July 4 at 10:00 a.m.
- ☉ Delafield Fireworks - July 2 at 9:00 p.m.
- ☉ Hartland Hometown Celebration - June 30 to July 2
- ☉ Hartland Parade - July 2 at 1:30 p.m.
- ☉ Lac La Belle (Village) Fireworks - July 3 at 9:00 p.m.
- ☉ Menomonee Falls Parade - July 3 at 7:00 p.m.
- ☉ Menomonee Falls Fireworks - July 3 at 7:00 p.m.
- ☉ Muskego 4th of July Celebration - July 3 at 3:00 p.m.
- ☉ Muskego Fireworks - July 3 at 9:30 p.m.
- ☉ New Berlin 4th of July Family Festival - July 2 to July 4
- ☉ New Berlin Kiddie Parade - July 4 at 9:30 a.m.
- ☉ New Berlin Parade - July 4 at 1:00 p.m.
- ☉ New Berlin Fireworks - July 4 at 10:00 p.m.
- ☉ Oconomowoc Parade - July 1 at 4:00 p.m.
- ☉ Oconomowoc Fireworks - July 1 at 9:00 p.m.
- ☉ Okauke Lake Fireworks - July 3 at 8:30 p.m.
- ☉ Pewaukee Parade - July 4 at 3:00 p.m.
- ☉ Pewaukee Fireworks - July 4 at 9:30 p.m.
- ☉ Sussex Kiddie Parade - July 4 at 9:15 a.m.
- ☉ Sussex Fireworks - July 4 at 9:00 p.m.
- ☉ Waukesha Parade - July 4 at 10:00 a.m.
- ☉ Waukesha Fireworks - July 4 at 9:15 p.m.



For additional information on an event, you can go to [http://](http://www.lakecountryfamilyfun.com/local-4th-of-july-event-guide)

[www.lakecountryfamilyfun.com/local-4th-of-july-event-guide](http://www.lakecountryfamilyfun.com/local-4th-of-july-event-guide)

## Summer Parade Survival Tips From: Lake Country Family Fun

- ☉ Bring water. Lots and lots of water.
- ☉ Get there early if you can't buddy up with another family that you love and whomever gets there first, saves enough space for the whole group.
- ☉ Strategically seat your family near a rest room if at all possible.
- ☉ Strategically seat your family near a place they can run and kill time prior to the parade starting. Many parades go by parks!
- ☉ Bring freeze pops or frozen yogurt tubes.
- ☉ Bring a small pair of scissors for said freeze pops. It will save time, frustration, and your teeth!
- ☉ Bring wet wash cloths in a ziplock bag to cool down your little people or to clean off your sweaty face and sticky hands. Throw them in the freezer or fridge and grab them just before you leave.
- ☉ Bring some band-aids.
- ☉ Bring a blanket to place on the sidewalk or curb. Once the parade begins, your little people will be chasing candy and not relaxing in their chairs. It helps give them parameters of what their "area" is, and how far they can go for candy.
- ☉ Snacks, snacks, snacks! If you bring a large bag of pretzels, bring some small bags/containers to give to each kid individually (bring a few more than you think you may need!).
- ☉ Let your children know their boundaries and expect them to abide by it with their mannerisms.
- ☉ Bring a few extra bags for the kids to round up their candy. Bring at least one extra for use as a trash bag.
- ☉ Bring sunscreen, if you can apply before the parade.
- ☉ Bring some extra baby wipes. They have so many purposes and can help in multiple ways
- ☉ Bring a few extra hair rubberbands.
- ☉ Possibly bring an extra change of clothes if you have a kid that likes to pour water on themselves, or are a sweaty little mess, or maybe you have somewhere to go afterwards.

## The Clothing Closet is Busting at the Seams!

The Clothing Closet is running out of room with donations of infant and toddler clothing. All of the clothing is in good condition with no stains or imperfections. We have some really nice things in there, and many items still have store tags on them!! We are hoping that Kinship and Foster Families will use this resource. Please contact Linda Finn, one of our Human Services Support Specialists, at 262-548-7254, to arrange a personal appointment to come in and "shop" in the clothing closet!



## Kinship & Foster Family Summer Splash!

**When:** Friday, August 18, 2017

**Where:** Cool Waters Aquatic Park, 2028 S. 124th St, West Allis, WI

**Time:** 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Join us to celebrate summer with this private event at the pool! You are welcome to bring snacks and beverages, but please no glass. You may bring in your own life jackets. Adults must be present. Only individuals who currently reside in the household are able to participate.

To Register: Forms have already been mailed out. They MUST be returned to Waukesha County HHS no later than Friday, July 28. Late registrations will not be accepted. If you need a replacement registration form, contact Libby Sinclair at [esinclair@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:esinclair@waukeshacounty.gov).

## Backpack Coalition, Inc.

Backpack Coalition, Inc. is now accepting applications for 2017!

If you know a family in need, please have them contact Kara Moore at 262-548-7284 or [kamoore@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:kamoore@waukeshacounty.gov).

The deadline for all applications is Friday, July 21, 2017.



## 4C Child Care Resource and Referral

Selecting quality child care is important. Navigating the child care community can involve many options, questions, and concerns. The staff at 4C can assist you in making wise and informed decisions about selecting quality child care. Families will receive tip sheets on selecting quality child care, sample interview questions, and a checklist to help families with their search. You can contact 4C at 414-562-2676, or visit their website at <http://www.4c-forchildren.org>.

# Additional Training and Events



## Training Offered By Waukesha County

### Parent Café

Parent Café's are an educational opportunity for parents to come together and deal with the stressors, worries and challenges of parenting in a supportive environment.

**October 3, December 5, 2017**

**6:00 PM - 7:45 PM**

**Center for Excellence**

N4W22000 Bluemound Road, Waukesha, WI

To register for childcare, RSVP or for questions call, 262-521-0317.

### Support Group For Dads

A group to enhance group members' experience as fathers. Topics of discussion will include coping with stress; developing a better relationship with partner/spouse/child's mother; identifying positive role models in your life; identifying how you are a positive role model for your child(ren); discussing your role as a father and what you would like to change or improve.

**Fourth Tuesday of each month**

**July 25, 2017**

**August 22, 2017**

**6:00PM - 7:30PM**

**Parents Place**

1570 E. Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, WI

262-549-5575

### Foster Parent Support Group

Our foster parent support group will now be facilitated by Allison Curtiss-Jaworski, our contracted Foster Parent Support Specialist, as requested by the Foster Parent Advisory Committee. This is a valuable opportunity for you to connect with other providers in order to have an open and candid discussion regarding the rewards and challenges of the critically important work you do. In order to receive ongoing training credit, an educational topic or article will be discussed.

On-site daycare is available, but you must register in advance by contacting Parents Place.

**First Thursday of each month**

**July 6, 2017**

**August 3, 2017**

**6:00 PM - 7:30 PM**

**Parents Place**

1570 E. Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, WI

262-549-5575



## Required Training

### Required Training For All Relative Care Providers, Level 1 and Level 2 Foster Homes

**Foster Parent Orientation** – The Foster Parent Orientation is open to anyone interested in becoming a foster parent. **If you are currently in the process of becoming a licensed foster parent, you are required to attend this Orientation class prior to the approval of your foster care license.** Please complete the on-line Pre-Placement training prior to attending the Orientation session. The online Pre-Placement training is located at <http://wcpwds.wisc.edu/Pre-Placement.htm> Please save the certificates after you have completed each Module. These are required to become licensed.

**WHEN:** July 11, August 8, September 12, October 10, November 14, and December 12, 2017

**TIME:** 5:30 - 6:30 pm

**WHERE:** Waukesha County Human Services, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI

RSVP to Libby Sinclair at

[esinclair@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:esinclair@waukeshacounty.gov) or 262-548-7277

(There is no childcare available.)



### Alcohol and Drug Addiction in Adults and Teens

Presented by Addiction Resource Council

Learn about the drug and alcohol trends in Waukesha County, drug addiction in adults, and signs and behaviors of drug addiction in teens.

A light dinner and daycare will be provided.

**July 20, 2017**

**6:00 PM**

**Center for Excellence**

N4W22000 Bluemound Road, Waukesha, WI

RSVP for this training: [http://](http://waukeshafostercaretraining.eventbrite.com)

[waukeshafostercaretraining.eventbrite.com](http://waukeshafostercaretraining.eventbrite.com)

### Independent Living for Teens

Presented by Michelle Montez, WCDHHS

The Independent Living Program is for foster youth, ages 14-1/2 and up. Learn about the assessment, Transition Plans, and new State Mandates.

A light dinner and daycare will be provided.

**August 17, 2017**

**6:00 PM**

**Center for Excellence**

N4W22000 Bluemound Road, Waukesha, WI

RSVP for this training: [http://](http://waukeshafostercaretraining.eventbrite.com)

[waukeshafostercaretraining.eventbrite.com](http://waukeshafostercaretraining.eventbrite.com)

## Contact Numbers:

Waukesha County  
Health & Human Services  
262-548-7212

Vickie Smith, Foster Care  
Licensing Supervisor  
262-970-4761

Susan Peck, Foster Care Level 2  
Coordinator  
262-896-8574

Libby Sinclair, Relative Foster  
Care Level 1 Coordinator  
262-548-7277

Megan Quandt, Kinship & Foster  
Care Coordinator  
262-548-7373

Jessica Morris, Kinship & Foster  
Care Coordinator  
262-548-7256

Eve Altizer, Ongoing Social Work  
Supervisor  
262-548-7272

Eric Calvino, Ongoing Social Work  
Supervisor  
262-548-7271

## Social Workers:

Tracy Clark ..... 262-548-7270  
Megan Fishler ..... 262-896-8570  
Abbey Girman ..... 262-548-7695  
Sharon Godwin ..... 262-548-7684  
Mallorie Hebeker ..... 262-896-6857  
Laura Jahnke ..... 262-548-7359  
Jamie Kasten ..... 262-548-7265  
Jessica Larsen ..... 262-548-7346  
Maria Maurer ..... 262-548-7345  
Chelsey Nisbet ..... 262-896-6896  
Rachel O'Sullivan ..... 262-548-7639  
Stacy Pawlak ..... 262-548-7262  
Elizabeth Russo ..... 262-548-7349  
Kim Sampson ..... 262-548-7273  
Linda Senger ..... 262-548-7698  
Sara Waldron ..... 262-548-7371  
Jamie West ..... 262-548-7264

Children's Mental Health Outreach  
262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911  
Family Emergency: 211 or  
262-547-3388

If an Allegation of Abuse or  
Neglect has been made  
against you, please call:

FASPP  
Norma Schoenberg  
920-922-9627