What do Children Need to Succeed?  
**Tips for Building Resiliency in Young Children**

Many young children face stressful living situations. The adversity that can stem from challenges such as poverty, parental conflict, illness and unstable housing can create behavioral problems and place a child at risk of poor academic performance. However, children faced with these risks and adversities can and do succeed when certain factors are present to help promote a child’s resiliency (protective factors). This tip sheet explores ways parents can build protective factors into children’s lives to help them thrive and better equip them to successfully handle future adversity.

**Protective factors in the home:**

- Attachments to at least one family member who engages in proactive, healthy behaviors
- Warm, structured, and positive discipline
- Household rules & structure / Parental monitoring
- Providing safe places for exploration and privacy
- Support from extended family
- Opportunity for children to contribute to the family goals
- Active listening and talking to children
- Extended family support
- Responding to and accepting children’s behavior
- Family members who show respect for other relatives and adults
- Family quality time with each other
- Caring adults outside the family who can serve as role models or mentors
- Teaching children effective and appropriate problem-solving skills
How Parents Can Build Resiliency in Children (continued)

- Communicate with your child by discussing, sharing, and reporting on the day’s events, ideas, observations, and feelings
- Provide unconditional love and express love both physically and verbally
- Enforce rules and use forms of discipline that do not belittle, harm, or reject the child
- Model behavior that you would like to see in the child
- Use natural consequences to help your child accept responsibility for his or her behavior
- Offer explanations and reconciliation along with rules and discipline
- Accept mistakes and failures while providing guidance toward improvement
- Nurture a positive self-view by discussing how successfully handling a hardship will help with future challenges
- Encourage your child to try and do things on his or her own
- Work with your child on setting goals and move towards them, one step at a time
- Empower your child by encouraging him or her to help others
- Help your child to develop empathy by helping identify his or her own feelings as well as those of others

For more information on resilience:
- Zero to Three: www.zerotothree.org
- Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov
- American Academy of Pediatrics: www.aap.org
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: www.nctsn.org
- Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University: www.developingchild.harvard.edu