

Parents Make the Biggest Difference in Strengths for Living and Learning

The following strengths help a child to be more open to learning, enjoy interacting with others, and coping with difficulties in life. Behavioral Concerns often improve as these skills grow.

INITIATIVE

This is the child's ability to try new things and to do things for herself. You can see initiative grow very quickly at this age. You see it when your child does not want you to help even if she seems to need it. You see it when she does something she would not even try just yesterday.

Grown-ups can help build this strength by letting their child:

- take his time to figure out answers to problems
- try new things
- make mistakes and try again
- know that you believe she can succeed

SELF-REGULATION

This is the ability to have strong feelings, and to express those feelings in healthy ways. It helps a child choose right from wrong. With self-regulation, your child can tell you what is upsetting him without a tantrum. At school he will be able to ask for help and not give up. He will find learning and getting along with other children will be easier.

Grown-ups can help build this strength by:

- discussing what is helpful and harmful (rules)
- letting their child see them speak calmly when they are upset
- helping their child say how she feels
- helping their child to think about better ways to handle problems
- not expecting children to handle more than a 3- or 4-year-old is able

ATTACHMENT/RELATIONSHIPS

A child learns to promote and maintain mutual, positive connections with other children and significant adults, thus fostering healthy bonds with others. This strength is also the key to how the child feels about herself. It opens her up to try new things and look to others for friendship or help.

Grown-ups can help build this strength when they:

- take care of the child's needs
- enjoy their child's company
- make sure their child can count on them when they promise something
- cuddle, play, and read with their child
- protect their child from scary situations whenever possible

For more tips on building these important skills, refer to *Promoting Resilience For Now and Forever: A Family Guide for Supporting the Social and Emotional Development of Preschool Children, Second Edition*, or talk with your child's teacher.