



# Parental Resilience

Strengthening Families Alaska Style

## What is it?

Parents who are emotionally resilient are able to bounce back during tough times and:

- Maintain a positive attitude most of the time
- Solve everyday problems creatively
- Model for their children how to manage daily stress

All parents have inner strengths to rely on when times are hard, but everyone needs a little time to recharge their balance of energy, patience, and sense of humor. When you take care of yourself in stressful times, your child learns healthy ways to cope with their own stress. So by taking care of yourself, you are giving your child tools to use over and over for the rest of their life. You will also be able to enjoy your parenting role more.

## Family Check-In: How are you doing?

Circle how you are feeling right now about the question below:

I take time to care for my own health and wellbeing.

1

2

3

4

At least once  
a year

About once a  
month

Sometime  
during the  
week

Every day in  
some way

Even though you are super busy as a parent of young children, it's still important to take a little "me time." Try one or all of the ideas below whenever you feel yourself going over the edge. Take a time-out all to yourself for a minute if your child is in a safe place, or try inviting your child to join you.

## Five "Mini-vacations" to sprinkle throughout your day or week:

- 1 **Breathe** in while counting to five. Hold your breath to the count of five. Breathe out—all the way out—to the count of ten. Repeat.
- 2 **Stretch** as high as you can. Stretch your arms behind your back. Twist from side to side. Bend over and try to touch your toes. Then shake yourself all over like a rag doll to shake your stress away.
- 3 **Make yourself a cup of calming tea.** Sit back, and think of a time or place you felt happy and relaxed. While drinking your tea, focus on the smell, the warmth of your hands holding the cup, look closely at the color of the tea, and take time to really enjoy the taste and be in the present moment.
- 4 **Call someone** you like and share what is happening in your day. Take time to listen to how their day is going too.
- 5 **Go for a walk,** take a bath, read a book, or whatever makes you feel alive and relaxed.



# Social Connections

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## What is it?

Parents can feel isolated and have a greater need for support from others when their children are young. Friends can be an important source for encouragement, advice, information on parenting issues, and back-up support. But just when you need friends the most, it can be the hardest to find the time and energy to get out and meet new people. Just remember that if you see someone with a young child, you will have so much in common!

## Family Check-in: How are you doing?

Rate the following:

I have relationships with people who support me when I need it.

1	2	3	4
Not so much	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time

List five people you can call on, or people you would like as a friend.

- |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
| 4. | 5. |    |

Try some of the following ideas to reach out and build your network of friends and neighbors. Like anything, once you get started, it gets easier.

## Five Tips to create social connections

- 1 Check the local newspaper, radio website and local churches for a list of activities and groups for parents with young children
- 2 Go to an event you haven't been to before.
- 3 Smile and say hello to another parent. Sometimes that's all it takes to make a connection.
- 4 Introduce yourself and start a conversation with another parent you haven't talked to before or in a long time.
- 5 Make a plan to meet with other parents to get together for a lunch or a play date.



# Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

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## What is it?

Understanding child development is an important part of good parenting. Having realistic expectations of what children can do and can not do at certain ages helps you to avoid frustration and understand your child better.

Who knows a child best - their likes and dislikes, the things that interest them and the things they can do really well? Parents do! Because children are always growing and changing, all parents need to keep growing and learning about their child's development and the best ways to help their children manage social and emotional behaviors.

When parents provide safe boundaries, affection, good listening skills and consistent rules and expectations, children thrive. Successful parenting helps children succeed in school, feel loved, get along with others and have a sense of belonging.

## Family Check-In: How are you doing?

Rate the following:

I have confidence in my ability to parent and take care of my children.

1	2	3	4
Not usually	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time

## Five ways to learn more about child development:

- 1 Talk to other parents, or even your own parents.
- 2 Look for parenting classes or support groups in your community.
- 3 Ask your doctor at your next well child check up.
- 4 Take a cruise through your local library for books and parenting magazines.
- 5 Find your favorite website and visit there often. Here are a few to get you started:

[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)  
[www.bestbeginningsalaska.org](http://www.bestbeginningsalaska.org)  
[www.threadalaska.org](http://www.threadalaska.org)  
[Www.naeyc.org](http://Www.naeyc.org)  
[www.alaskachildrenstrust.org](http://www.alaskachildrenstrust.org)



# Concrete Support in Times of Need

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## What is it?

As a parent of a young child, sometimes it can be hard to get the help and advice you need. Experiencing problems with housing, finances, conflict in relationships, illness or unemployment can sap your energy and take your focus away from your child. Getting help when you need it helps you reassure and give your child what he or she needs, and helps reduce stress and anxiety in your whole family. Support can go a long way toward helping you keep your balance, hope, and sense of humor with your child.

## Family Check-In: How are you doing?

Rate the following:

I know who in the community to contact when I need help.

1	2	3	4
Not so much	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time

List five resources/organizations that supported you in the past, or may be a support in the future:

- |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
| 4. | 5. |    |

Talking to other parents is a great way to learn about local resources. Having someone share their experience and talk you through the process can make you feel a lot more comfortable when trying something new.

## Five ways to find help when you have a crisis:

- 1 Call 211— a statewide referral service that can link you to all kinds of supports.
- 2 Go to [www.211alaska.org](http://www.211alaska.org) and search for yourself.
- 3 Call the Alaska Parent Line at 1-800-643-KIDS (5437) and talk to a trained parent educator who will listen and help you brainstorm solutions for your concerns.
- 4 Call an organization you are familiar with already, or a faith community.
- 5 Ask your medical provider for a referral.



# Social and Emotional Competence of Children

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## What is it?

Social and emotional skills are the most important skills young children learn during their first years of life. How you respond to your child's emotions impacts how he or she learns to understand and cope with feelings of anger, happiness, and sadness that are a normal part of the human experience.

Parenting is a two-way street. As children grow and develop the ability to interact with the family and others in a positive manner, it is easier for parents to respond in the same way. One of the most important ways you can nurture your child's social and emotional development is to spend time every day reading, talking, and really listening.

## Family Check-In: How are you doing?

Rate the following:

My child is a pleasure to be around.

1	2	3	4
Once in a while	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time

Parents today have a lot on their plates. Juggling the demands of work, home and other responsibilities leaves many parents feeling like they do not have nearly enough time with their children. But even small acts of kindness - a hug, a smile, or loving words - make a big difference to children.

## Five tips to help your child build social and emotional skills:

- 1 Take a break from "screen time," sit on the floor, and play with your child.
- 2 Read books together that both you and your child enjoy.
- 3 Have family dinners together at least a few times a week.
- 4 Follow a regular routine of meals, bedtime, baths, and family time.
- 5 Check out the library or websites for fun activities to do together:  
[www.familyeducation.com](http://www.familyeducation.com) (the first parenting site on the web!)  
[www.bestbeginningsalaska.org](http://www.bestbeginningsalaska.org) (activities with Imagination Library books)  
[www.pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org) (read, view, and do activities)