
INTRODUCTION

Hi and welcome to the Cerebral Palsy Foundation's ParentWise Podcast series. I'm Robyn Cummins.

In part two of our resilience podcasts, social work consultant Jenny Griffiths explains how problem solving can be a powerful tool for building your child's confidence to cope in stressful situations.

SOME OF THE CHALLENGES

Hi, I'm Jenny Griffiths.

As we heard in part 1, the term 'resilience' is strongly connected to your child's ability to 'bounce back' from circumstances or situations that are particularly challenging. Today we'll find out how problem solving can help develop kids' coping strategies further.

So what are some of the challenging things that your child might face in the future? Social isolation, comprehension and communication difficulties, bullying and dealing with the physical limitations that a disability can create, can be overwhelming for both your child and your family.

By role modelling effective problem solving skills and teaching your child the steps in problem solving, you can help your child to gain greater control over their environment and to deal effectively with challenging situations.

ROLE MODELLING

You are the most important role model in your child's life, particularly in the early years.

How you and other family members deal with problems will be closely observed by your child.

The more you manage difficult or challenging situations appropriately, the more your child is likely to also.

This includes being confident and optimistic in your outlook and the comments you make, looking for the positives in experiences and thinking positively about yourself and the world.

The more optimistic you are, the less likely you are to feel defeated and hopeless about challenging situations you face.

EFFECTIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

There are several steps to effective problem solving.

- Firstly it's essential to state the problem clearly. Listen carefully to your child and help them to be clear about the issue or problem and why it is happening (break it down into smaller parts if it is easier to deal with).

- Next, brainstorm solutions together (no matter how silly they may sound).
- Debate the positives and the negatives of each solution (it can often be what seems to be the most unlikely solution that can end up being the most feasible).
- Then, select what appears to be the best solution.
- 'Trial' your solution by putting it into action. This may involve role playing a scenario with your child or having a 'trial run'.
- Finally, review how the solution worked and make any changes. Ask your child to think about what they did well and what they might do differently next time.
- Most importantly, don't be afraid to try other solutions, if the first one doesn't work.

Encourage your child to come up with their own solutions to problems and give them lots of praise for their problem solving attempts.

The more their problem solving skills develop, the more resilient they will become, and the better they'll be able to cope and manage stressful life events.

CLOSE

Thanks for listening. We hope you've found these strategies and ideas useful.

You can download or listen to more episodes in the ParentWise Podcast series at the Cerebral Palsy Foundation's website - www.cpfoundation.com.au