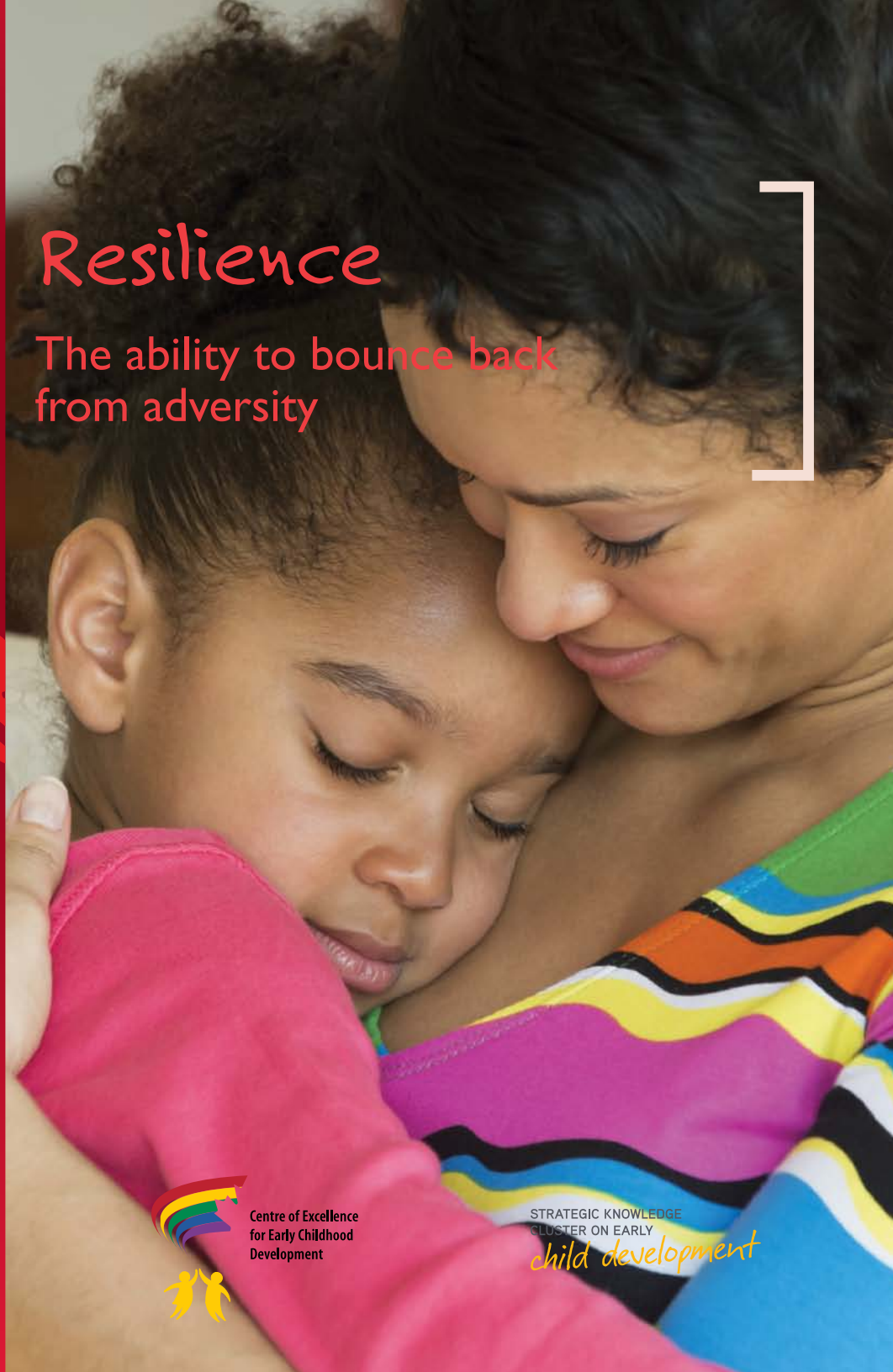


Eyes on



# Resilience

The ability to bounce back from adversity



PARENTS



Centre of Excellence  
for Early Childhood  
Development

STRATEGIC KNOWLEDGE  
CLUSTER ON EARLY

*child development*



**“Early childhood is an important time to nurture the development of resilience.”**

## What do we know?

- For some children, difficult circumstances (e.g., the death of a parent, living in poverty or being in a natural disaster) can affect their development. Yet most children can successfully deal with these difficulties because they are resilient.
- Resilience is being able to adapt to difficult circumstances in a positive way.
- Resilience is not a personality trait: it varies depending on the duration, nature and accumulation of risk factors and depending on the support the child gets.
- Some children who show resilience in one aspect (e.g., school) may struggle in another (e.g., getting along with peers).
- When a child has limited access to the resources in his environment, the capacity to show resilience may be compromised, although the impact may vary greatly from one child to another.
- Early childhood is an important time to nurture the development of resilience by stimulating the emergence of children’s individual competences and by supporting their parents, important actors in this learning.
- There are a number of factors that support the building of resilience. How effective they are depends on the child’s age, personal resources and protection systems. These include:
  - Personal strengths: having good social skills and an easy-going personality. Being able to regulate one’s emotions after a stressful event.
  - Social supports: having supportive friends, available and sensitive caregivers, and at least one warm and consistent relationship with an adult.
  - Factors such as the family having enough money, safe and stable schools, communities and neighbourhoods.
- A child’s resilience is closely associated with his executive functions (e.g., memory, attention, being able to control impulses) and cognitive control. These skills help a child to adapt to changes in his environment caused by a stressful event.

Paying attention to...

What can be done?

... pregnancy and the early years.

- During pregnancy, have realistic expectations of how your life will be after birth.
- When you are in stressful situations, get the support you need to stay healthy and provide a nurturing environment for your child.
- Look for childcare with warm and consistent educators and keep a close connection with them.

... your child's age and development when adversity strikes.

- Resilience varies with age. For instance, your toddler may be adapting well to adversity by showing strong attachment to you. But your 5-year-old may cope better with good relationships with his peers.
- Recognize that if your child is irritable or if his play involves the traumatic event, he may need psychological help. See your family doctor for advice.

... your child's executive functioning. (See information sheet Executive functions: Help your child think before acting).

- Involve your child in activities such as specific computer-based training, and physical activity such as martial arts.
- Play games that involve taking turns, attention and memory.
- Set clear limits and rules to foster your child's self-control (e.g., ask your child to stay at the table until supper is over or ask him to complete a task).

... your own well-being and parenting behaviour during adversity.

- After a stressful event, try to restore a regular routine as soon as possible, keeping in mind that new routines may have to be established.
- Be physically and emotionally available to your child's reactions.
- Listen and let your child ask questions. Follow your child's lead and discuss the traumatic experience. If you find it difficult, seek help from a professional who knows about post-traumatic treatments.

... the type of interventions best suited for your child.

- Participate in interventions with your child to help your family regain a normal life.
- Find treatments that fit with your child's personality, development and culture.



# Information

This information sheet is a publication of the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (CEECD) and the Strategic Knowledge Cluster on Early Child Development (SKC-ECD). These organizations identify and summarize the best scientific work on early childhood development. They disseminate this knowledge to a variety of audiences in formats and languages adapted to their needs.



Encyclopedia  
on Early Childhood  
Development

For a more in-depth understanding of resilience, consult our synthesis and experts' articles on this topic in the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development, available free of charge at [www.child-encyclopedia.com](http://www.child-encyclopedia.com).

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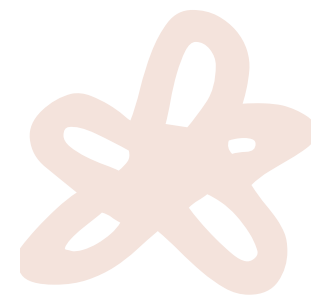
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