

Control

When children realize that they can control the outcomes of their decisions and actions, they're more likely to know that they have the ability to do what it takes to bounce back. On the other hand, if parents make all the decisions, children are denied opportunities to learn control. A child who feels "everything always happens to me" tends to become passive, pessimistic, or even depressed. He sees control as external—whatever he does really doesn't matter because he has no control of the outcome. But a resilient child knows that he has internal control. By his choices and actions, he determines the results. He knows that he can make a difference, which further promotes his competence and confidence.

Some questions about control:

- Do I help my child understand that life's events are not purely random and most things happen as a direct result of someone's actions and choices?
- On the other hand, do I help my child understand that he isn't responsible for many of the bad circumstances in his life (such as parents' separation or divorce)?
- Do I help him think about the future, but take it one step at a time?
- Do I help him recognize even his small successes so he can experience the knowledge that he can succeed?
- Do I help him understand that no one can control all circumstances, but everyone can shift the odds by choosing positive or protective behaviors?
- Do I understand that discipline is about teaching, not punishing or controlling? Do I use discipline as a means to help my child understand that his actions produce certain consequences?
- Do I reward demonstrated responsibility with increased privileges?

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