

# Bringing the Lessons Home



## Building children's competence

Teaching children to be resilient is an essential part of making sure they have the tools to respond to difficult challenges as they grow into young adults. Pediatrician Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg has identified seven important skills to help build resilience. For Bringing the Lessons Home, we are focusing on competence. To explore the other six skills, we encourage you to visit [www.fosteringresilience.com](http://www.fosteringresilience.com) or check out Dr. Ginsburg's book, *Building resilience in children and teens: Giving kids roots and wings*.

By definition, the term competence means "the ability to do something effectively." In young children, competence is built through everyday life experiences. For example, when a child builds with blocks, he eventually learns that the base needs to have a solid foundation in order to support the rest of the structure. As parents, it is our job to not immediately rush in to show them how to make it work, but to let the child discover this on their own. It is through the struggle of trying that children build competence. Naturally, we can guide, but should avoid "taking over."



We can help develop children's competence by:

- Ensuring that your desire to teach or to protect your child from frustration or challenges doesn't mistakenly send a message that you don't think he or she is capable of handling things
- Empowering children to make decisions leading to discovery
- Recognizing the competencies of siblings individually and avoiding comparisons

Competence is acquired by mastering tasks and facing challenges. As parents, we balance when and how parental involvement helps or hurts. By supporting children's problem solving skills, occasionally "getting out of the way," and offering gentle guidance when necessary, we foster our children's growing sense of independence.