



Theoretical article

FACTORS INFLUENCED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESILIENCE IN CHILDHOOD: SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BIOLOGICAL ASPECTS.

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“A child is like a diamond, which, if well polished, becomes the pride of the jeweler and the people who see and wear it, but can be ruined or lose its value if it is in the hands of an apprentice or an inept craftsman.”

Daniel Kemp

Abstract: Resilience or psychological resilience is an important mechanism that helps overcome difficulties, stressful situations, and traumatic events. The possibility of developing resilience is the result of the interaction of multiple factors, which can be social, emotional, and biological. The theoretical review in this article aims to analyze and synthesize modern scientific data related to these mechanisms and conditions that contribute to the formation of a healthy and flexible personality in children.

Keywords: resilience, psychological resilience, children

Resilience in children is a complex and multifaceted process that determines their ability to adapt to life challenges, trauma, and stressful situations. In recent decades, there has been a significant scientific interest in studying the factors that support or hinder the formation of this psychological ability and how it is realized in children. The general conclusion from research efforts is that resilience is not a permanent trait, but a dynamic, developing process that can be stimulated and strengthened through appropriate environments and interventions.

The first scientific approaches consider resilience as the result of the interaction between internal personal characteristics (such as self-confidence, emotional intelligence, cognitive flexibility) and the external supportive environment - family, school, social networks (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003). This modeling substantiates that in the presence of strong personal resources, children more easily overcome life difficulties, and the supportive environment helps them enter an active cyclical dynamic of development and strengthening of resilience.

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Resilience, or psychological resilience, is defined as the ability of a person (in childhood and adolescence) to adapt positively to stressful and traumatic situations, while maintaining psychological well-being. This ability does not imply the absence or absence of difficult circumstances, but rather the ability to overcome and recover from their impact, through active internal and external mechanisms (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Masten, 2014).

It is an adaptive mechanism that allows the individual to develop internal flexibility, strong motivation and emotional regulation (Rutter, 2012). At the heart of the concept is the understanding that resilience is not only an innate characteristic, but also a developmental and changing process over time, which can be supported and strengthened through appropriate interventions (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004).

Contemporary research indicates that resilience is built as a dynamic process that involves the interaction of multiple factors — from personality traits and cognitive skills to social support and environment. It is an adaptive mechanism that allows the child to develop internal flexibility, strong motivation and emotional regulation (Rutter, 2012).

At the heart of the concept is the understanding that resilience is not only an innate characteristic, but also a developmental and changing process over time, which can be supported and strengthened through appropriate interventions (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004).

Research suggests that key components of resilience include the ability to control emotions, flexibility in thinking, the ability to create and maintain social support, and the presence of internal beliefs about one's own capabilities and value. An important aspect is also the ability to “rethink” negative events, which reduces their psychological impact (“causes” less stress and anxiety) and helps build a positive perspective on the future (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000).

The family is the first and most significant social context for the development of resilience in children. Research shows that a sense of security, support and understanding from parents are among the most important predictors of the formation of social resilience. Parental emotional support, positive boundary setting and the promotion of independence create the basis for healthy self-esteem and the ability to cope with life's challenges. In the presence of positive parental support, children have higher indicators of emotional flexibility and resilience to traumatic situations (Masten et al., 2012).

The role of role models is also key — children learn coping strategies, behavioral patterns, and emotional regulation skills by observing their parents. Strengthening positive parental communication and a focus on developing emotional intelligence lead to a higher level of resilience in children (Luthar, 2006).

In addition to the family, the school environment is a crucial setting that fosters social learning, the development of communication skills, and social support. Teachers and classmates can act as important protective factors that enhance children's resilience. Working in a group, social skills, and a supportive school environment can protect children from negative psychosocial consequences in difficult life situations (Luthar et al., 2000).

In modern conditions, the developing digital environment provides additional opportunities and challenges. Maintaining online connections can promote a sense of social support, while excessive and improper use can significantly reduce opportunities for developing real social skills, which are important for building resilience.

Emotional intelligence is a key element in developing resilience and coping skills in children. High levels of self-awareness, empathy, and emotional management are associated with greater resilience and a lower risk of mental disorders (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004).

A growing body of research supports the idea that social-emotional competence—such as the ability to recognize and manage emotions, empathy, and positive communication—is a key mechanism for building resilience in children (Masten et al., 2009). Techniques such as expanded self-awareness, active communication, and conflict resolution significantly enhance children's ability to cope with life's challenges.

Research also suggests that resilience can be developed in children through approaches such as social-emotional learning (SEL), positive pedagogy, emotional intelligence programs, and therapeutic interventions focused on strengthening internal resources. (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004).

Many of these approaches emphasize that the development of resilience is a process that can be activated and strengthened through targeted interventions that stimulate self-knowledge, social skills and emotional flexibility in children. The factor of adolescent identity is also important, which, when maintained and supported, strengthens self-confidence, belief in one's own strengths and motivation to achieve personal goals, even in the face of difficulties.

In the context of practical work, interventions to increase resilience include teaching children social-emotional skills, developing positive beliefs about themselves, as well as creating a supportive environment in which children can develop adaptive strategies for dealing with challenges. Such a holistic approach through family, school, and community support not only limits the risk of developing mental disorders, but also strengthens the ability to effectively interact with the environment and overcome life crises (Masten & Wright, 2010).

Research shows that the process of developing resilience in children is largely activated during early childhood through interventions that strengthen personal and social competencies. These include:

- Developing emotional intelligence: Children learn to recognize, name, and manage their own emotions through pedagogical models that promote emotional awareness and regulation. These skills help them avoid impulsive reactions and respond more adaptively in complex situations (Denham et al., 2012).
- Promoting positive social connections: Social support and meaningful relationships with adults and peers are fundamental to developing resilience. According to research, children who feel accepted, supported, and valued at school and family develop higher confidence in their own abilities and improve their cognitive and emotional resources (Luthar et al., 2000).
- Practical programs to develop resilience: Studies conducted with prevention programs that emphasize social-emotional learning (SEL) have shown that structured interventions that

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include stress management techniques, conflict resolution, and personal skills development lead to significant increases in adaptive behavior patterns and resilience in children (Durlak et al., 2011).

- The role of neuroscientific mechanisms: New findings in the field of neuroscience confirm that the flexibility in the development of neural networks in the brain, especially in the prefrontal cortex — the area that controls emotions and impulses — is a major biological mechanism for strengthening resilience. This means that with the right environment and training, children's brains can actively adapt and strengthen their defense systems against negative impacts (Tottenham et al., 2011).

Neuroscience evidence suggests that neural pathways in the brain involved in emotional regulation and social interaction are in a constant state of development throughout childhood. Functional magnetic resonance imaging studies have shown that in children who demonstrate high resilience, activity in the prefrontal cortex and amygdala is balanced, allowing for effective emotional regulation and control over stress responses (Tottenham et al., 2011).

Studies have shown that children from cultures that value collectivism often develop strong social support and greater resilience in dealing with life's obstacles, thanks to the overall structure of society and family. At the same time, individualistic cultures may encourage autonomy and personal choice, which creates different strategies for building resilience (Ungar, 2011).

Resilience in children is a complex, multifaceted, and dynamic process that is largely dependent on the interaction between personality characteristics, family support, social environment, and neurobiological mechanisms. Its development is a key factor in children's well-being and ability to successfully cope with life's challenges, and understanding and strengthening it is an essential task for psychologists, pedagogical specialists, and parents. Investment in the development and implementation of strategies for the development of resilience represents one of the most effective approaches to the prevention of mental illness and to the construction of a healthy, adaptive personality.

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