Keys to Quality Afterschool

Spotlighting Best Practice, Tools and Resources in Out-of-School Time

Building resiliency in your students, staff and program:

- *Best Practices*
- *Tools and Resources*
- *Connecting to Standards*
- *Professional Development*

🔑 Seeds for Success: Social Emotional Learning in Out-of-School time

According to Dr. Robin Stern the Director for New Media Research and Development at the Center for Social and Emotional Education at Teacher's College, Columbia University, Emotional well-being is "dramatically and positively predictive not only of academic achievement, but also of satisfactory and productive experiences in the world of work and marriage, even of better physical health."

Researchers and psychologists maintain that social and emotional competencies "allow us to modulate emotions, solve social problems creatively, to be effective leaders and collaborators, (and) to be assertive and responsible."

By strengthening and increasing social-emotional educational opportunities, we will increase our children's capacity to learn, give them the tools to aspire to personal and professional achievements, and enable them to experience personal satisfaction.

The good news is that out-of-school time is the ideal environment where social and emotional skills can be learned and enhanced.

In a November 6, 1999 speech delivered at a conference on Social and Emotional Learning and Digital Technology, Dr. James Comer, a national leader in social and emotional learning told a group at Columbia Teachers College about the impact a child's school and home settings can have on his/her development. Comer explains that an atmosphere that provides support for one's social and emotional learning and competence ver-
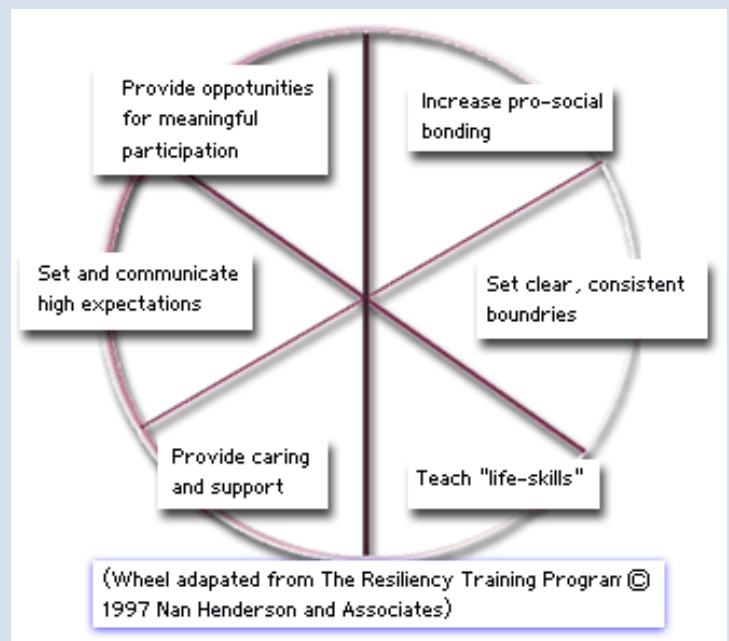
The Resiliency/ Wellness Approach

The Resiliency/ Wellness Approach is based on six key environmental protective factors for positive human development, which are demonstrated in the Resiliency Wheel above. If these protective factors are strongly and well implemented in programs, they will promote positive social- emotional development, and will support student achievement. The Resiliency Approach also emphasizes the strengthening of individual personal protective factors such as self motivation, humor, flexibility, creativity, perseverance, and love of learning. It provides:

- A strengths-based perspective
- Personal and Environmental Protective Factors
- Positive Human Development
- Holistic Wellness (Social/Emotional/Academic/ Physical)

Adapted from PA Dept. of Education and Nan Henderson

Provide oppotunities for meaningful participation

Increase pro-social bonding

Set and communicate high expectations

Set clear, consistent boundries

Provide caring and support

Teach "life-skills"

(Wheel adapted from The Resiliency Training Program © 1997 Nan Henderson and Associates)

SEEDS

sus one that does not can make a huge difference in that child's life. The difference, Comer claims, is equal to the difference in the outcome of throwing seeds on cement versus planting seeds in enriched soil. And what a difference that is!

How can we integrate social and emotional learning into a child's life so they become a more resilient bounce back kid?

Building Resiliency in OST

Resiliency is an important life skill because we all face disappointment and changing circumstances. Researchers found seven common resiliency themes which they categorized as insight, independence, relationships, initiative, creativity, humor, and morality. All represent behaviors that children can learn and practice in after-school programs, and which can help achieve success beyond the classroom.

Building resilience — the ability to adapt well to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress — can help our children manage stress and feelings of anxiety and uncertainty.

The experiences that fostered resiliency do not take place in a special "resiliency corner," or "resiliency time," they occur when out-of school practitioners provided children ample opportunities to develop and practice behaviors associated with resilience. We help children develop resiliency when:

- ***Children are involved in a predictable routine in a safe setting with caring staff.*** The staff makes an effort to greet and connect with children daily. Staff that build trusting relationships with children and help them feel they belong and matter. By developing predictable routines children can count on as well as opportunities for youth to contribute to planning activities focuses on youth as resources and gives them a sense of purpose.

- ***Children are involved in assessing their own work and in setting goals for themselves.*** By giving children feedback out-of school staff can foster insight, the habit of asking thoughtful questions. Constructive feedback helps children to honestly consider the quality of their work, think about what has been learned, and understand how they performed in relation to expectations. As their insight develops, children can begin to evaluate their own work, guided by adults who ask, "What was easy (or difficult) for you?" or, "What might you do differently next time?"

- ***Children have many opportunities to work collaboratively.*** In classrooms where collaborative learning is encouraged, children practice making and sustaining fulfilling relationships with others. These relationships develop as children learn from each other, while working with a partner or in small groups. As children collaborate, they learn to take turns, share, give and get help, and listen to others.

- ***Children participate in meetings to solve classroom problems.*** Difficulties arise in every classroom over such issues as being first at something, violating another child's "space," or taking someone else's belongings. When staff use classroom meetings to solve these problems rather than rely on their own authority, they build initiative in children. Calling a meeting conveys the message, "In this classroom, we don't regard problems as stumbling blocks or as evidence that something bad is happening. We have the power to solve our problems." Classroom meetings give children opportunities to practice the skills of exchanging ideas and listening to one another.

- ***Children have opportunities to make choices.*** Giving children choices encourages creativity. Choices can also allow children to decide how they can express themselves through their activities. After reading a book they might draw pictures, paint a mural, create a computer design or game, build a model, put on a skit or puppet show, or write a report. Often these artistic expressions mingle personal aspects of

a child's self along with the newly learned material.

- ***Children feel connected in a classroom structured as a community.*** When classrooms are organized as communities rather than as authority-based hierarchies, a group spirit emerges. In such an environment, children can practice the resiliency of humor by learning to laugh at themselves and help others see fun in everyday happenings. Humor can be a daily part of life in a classroom community, where children greet each other, share family stories and events, and make jokes about themselves. Being able to laugh about mistakes together cuts tension and lessens competitiveness.

- ***Children play an active role in setting rules for classroom life.*** Rule-making is a way for children to practice morality. Discussing rules invites them to weigh consequences and reflect on concepts like fairness, the reasons for rules, and the instances when they apply. Creating their own rules helps children develop responsibility for their own behavior, for one another, and for the group.

When out -of-school staff encourages children to practice behaviors that can apply to their lives, they enable them to rise above hardships and succeed. Classroom practice can make a real difference in the lives of children. We can help them with a repertoire of approaches that promote insight, independence, initiative, relationships, creativity, humor, and morality in the classroom every day. The Resiliency Model fits well in OST programs that are also designed to reach out to families and the community to build on youth's strengths.

Spotlight Best Practice: Models to Build Resiliency

Effective Climates

Afterschool programs can help youth in a number of ways. They can provide a safe place for youth in their communities, and when run well, they can help youth avoid drug abuse, delinquency, and teen pregnancy. Not only can afterschool programs help reduce problem behaviors, they can also be a place where youth build skills and supportive relationships with adults.

The focus of this applied research project is to understand how to help afterschool programs promote citizenship, skills, and positive youth behavior that may ultimately lead to preventing delinquency and substance abuse.

LEGACY: Leading, Educating, Guiding, A Community of Youth Together

Project Description and Plan

Participating afterschool program sites will be randomly assigned to receive program support and coaching on the cooperative game, or to act as a comparison site conducting "business as usual". Survey and observational data on the staff and children will be collected to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. Research reports will be disseminated in scientific literature through journals and chapters and via clearinghouses and/or Web sites that help both scientists and practitioners

We expect that this project will help us find and validate tools that can be used effectively to understand and improve afterschool settings. Moreover, if successful, an afterschool program manual and training will be developed in collaboration with one of our partners. Research reports will be disseminated in scientific literature through journals and chapters and via clearinghouses and/or web sites that help both scientists and practitioners.

For more information on this project contact:

The Center for Diverse Families and Communities
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Resiliency Model Web Resources

The following resources can be linked to the Resiliency Wheel and provide an opportunity for Out-of-School time programs to engage in discussions with school districts.

The PA Department of Education supports the resiliency model framework to promote student achievement.

Chapter 12: Students and Student Services Guidance Tool Kit for Program Design and Structure, *8/20/08.*
www.pde.state.pa.us/

School Wide Positive Behavior Support
Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) is a pro-active approach to discipline that promotes appropriate student behavior and increases learning.
http://www.pattan.net/teachlead/SpecialProjects1.aspx

Pennsylvania School Climate Standards (Draft)
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pennsylvania_school_climate_standards/18977/pennsylvania_school_climate_standards_%28draft%29/682166

Pennsylvania Interpersonal Skills Standards (Draft)
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pennsylvania_school_climate_standards/18977/pennsylvania_interpersonal_skills_standards_%28draft%29/682169

Resiliency in Action
Practical Ideas for Overcoming Risks and Building Strengths in Youth, Families & Communities.
Practical ideas http://www.resiliency.com/

Do Something
Ideas for how young people can make a difference in their communities.
http://www.dosomething.org

"Fostering Educational Resilience in Inner-City Schools"
by Margaret C. Wang, Geneva D. Haertel, and Herbert J. Walberg (1997).
This paper provides research on educational practices that promote learning success and resilience among children at risk of educational failure.
http://www.temple.edu/LSS/L97-4.htm

Linkages between Resiliency and Student Achievement

Below are some practical ideas for building children and youth strengths using the resiliency wheel framework. The first column lists the six environmental protective factors. The second column lists strategies for implementation and the third column provides guiding questions for further reflection. (Created by Carmen Gatti and Patricia Hess, Montgomery Early Learning Centers).

Resiliency Wheel Environmental Protective Factors	Strategies for implementation in OST	Guiding Questions
Providing Caring and Support	Daily greeting and acknowledgement of children and families Set up an environment that the child can trust with a predictable routine, a place for their belongings, children's work showcased, and culturally sensitive materials Communicate positively with child using a strengths-based focus Engage families as trusted partners Conduct regular student and family surveys to inform program practices	To what extent do children engage in cooperative peer interactions? To what extent are the students involved in the daily planning of program activities? To what extent do students have a sense of belonging? To what extent are families/community invited to partner with the program?
Set and Communicate High Expectations	Include children in decision making activities Hold discussions/forums on safety, and teach independent living skills such as problem solving, de-stressing, study skills, organizational skills Establish realistic expectations based on developmental stage of the child, cultural understanding and diverse learning styles	To what extent do children feel empowered in making program decisions? To what extent do students believe that any positive goal can be accomplished? To what extent do teachers recognize and communicate student strengths? To what extent do students encourage themselves and others to do their best?
Provide Opportunities for Meaningful Participation	Provide opportunities on a daily basis for creative activities (e.g. music, art, dance, sports, creative writing, culinary arts, etc.) Explore character development and critical thinking skills Afterschool clubs are offered based on student interests and promote community participation	To what extent does the curriculum explore projects, music, outdoor exploration, the arts? To what extent are students exposed to service learning opportunities? To what extent are students engaged in planning activities?
Increasing Pro-Social Bonding	Provide a caring climate that promotes friendship building and teaches social skills Provide opportunities to debate current issues and community challenges Provide avenues for team and community building	To what extent are students engaged in cooperative peer-to-peer interactions? To what extent are students connected to community events? To what extent does staff connect families with like interests and like needs? To what extent are there caring relationships among staff?
Set Clear Consistent Boundaries	Engage children in setting boundaries that identifies clear rules and consequences Teach individual child accountability and risk taking that promotes positive choices and decision making Teach cause and effect with children and allow them to explore social situations	To what extent do students understand the rules and program expectations? To what extent do teachers accept no excuses for student apathy? To what extent do rules keep students feeling connected?
Teach Life Skills	Engage children in authentic project-based learning and community involvement experiences Provide opportunities for children to explore the world beyond home and family such as, field trips, special community visitors, and staff and family members who share cultural traditions, job experiences, passions and hobbies Teach healthy conflict resolution, problem solving, stress management, and refusal skills.	To what extent does staff provide opportunities for meaningful participation and community advocacy? To what extent do children set their own goals for developing talents and improving life skills? To what extent do children respect other's opinion that differs from their own?

10 Commandments of Interactions with School-Age Children

Staff interactions are critical to the positive social/emotional climate in programs. Here are some ideas for improving interactions with youth. Please feel free to use this document in program staff meetings, one on one meetings with director and staff or other opportunities for professional improvement and growth.

I. Thou shalt not speak to a child from across the room.

II. Thou shalt get down on the child's eye level and always use children's names.

III. Thou shalt teach and encourage children to use problem-solving.

IV. Remember to be aware of tone of voice and speak to children respectfully, always mindful of their self-esteem.

V. Honor, accept, help identify, and validate children's feelings.

VI. Thou shalt ask open ended (divergent and convergent) questions to encourage thinking skills.

VII. Thou shalt greet children warmly when they arrive and as they depart, and continue to make them feel welcomed throughout the day.

VIII. Thou shalt state things in a positive way, telling children what they **CAN** do, and not what they **CAN'T** do.

IX. Thou shalt serve as a positive role model for children and families.

X. Thou shalt remember to use genuine and authentic praise and strength-based approach—including appropriate affection.

Adapted from Cathy Abraham's 10 Commandments of Interactions with Children

> *"Resiliency is a strengths based model, meaning its focus is on providing the supports and opportunities which promote life success, rather than trying only to eliminate the factors that promote failure."*

Practice and Reflection Plan of Action

Reflect on which of these you do well and which you need to improve. Devise your plan of action for self-improvement.

Make a list of the commandments that you are already using in your program and show evidence of how you support these commandments:	**List the commandments that you need to grow and a strategy for how you will accomplish this:**

Resiliency Quiz for School-Age Children

Resiliency keeps children going and growing despite difficult times. It keeps youth searching for better solutions to the problems they face. Here is a tool that you can use to help identify strengths. You may wish to complete this reflection independently or with the assistance of an adult.

How are you a "bounce back kid?"

The more times you answer "YES" below, the higher you will bounce back from life's problems. **Be proud of your YES answers and think about how you can change the NO answers to a YES!**

1. Caring
_____ I have many people in my life who love me, listen to me, and will always be there for me.
_____ I know someone who cares about me at school.
_____ I take good care of myself by eating well, sleeping well, and cleaning myself up.

2. Beliefs
_____ Many people in my life believe I am responsible and can do well in school.
_____ People tell me that I am smart and that I do well in school.
_____ I believe I am smart and tell myself I can do my best.

3. Working With Others
_____ My friends listen to me and let me choose what we play.
_____ People listen to me and like my ideas.
_____ I like to help other people in my school and at home.

4. Helpful Relationships
_____ I have some hobbies and activities that I enjoy.
_____ I am part of a team or an after school club that I enjoy.
_____ I have close friends at my school.

5. Boundaries
_____ I respect my friends and family and they respect me and allow me to be myself.
_____ I know the rules at home and the rules at school.
_____ I stand up for myself and tell others "no" when I need to.

6. Life Skills
_____ I am a good listener and know how to solve problems with friends.
_____ I know what it takes to do well in school.
_____ I know how to set goals and meet them.

J.Boes, 2009. Adapted from Resiliency in Action, Nan Henderson (2007).

Remember:
"What is right with you is more powerful than anything wrong…"

Individual Protective Factors that Facilitate Resiliency:

Put a check mark by each one that is true for you. Circle one that you would like to do better:

❑ I am able to be a friend to others and make friends easily

❑ I like to laugh and can make other people laugh

❑ I can make my own choices

❑ I understand people very well

❑ I am able to do things on my own without the help of others

❑ I believe I will have a great future

❑ I do well with changes

❑ I love to learn new things

❑ I do my work without being told to

❑ There is one thing (or many things) that I can do really well

❑ I like myself and I am proud of myself

❑ I believe in God or a higher power

❑ I don't give up easily

❑ I am very creative

On a separate piece of paper draw a picture of you "bouncing back"!

Additional resources

The following websites provide teachers with resources and lesson plans regarding social emotional development, character development, community projects and much more!

Active Peer Mediation Programs
http://www.coe.ufl.edu/CRPM/othersites.html
A list of sites for Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation.

CASEL: Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning
http://casel.org
This organization works to advance the science and evidence-based practice of social and emotional learning. Includes research, tools and policy information.

Character Counts! - Free Lesson Plans
http://charactercounts.org/lesson-plans/index.html
These free lesson plans support the Six Pillars of Character® and are created by teachers.

Conflict Resolution Activities for K-12
http://teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-3038.html
Lesson plans from Educators for Social Responsibility.

K-12 Giraffe Heroes Program - a Free Lesson
http://www.giraffe.org/k12_3.html
Inspire students to be courageous, caring, and responsible members of the community by helping them redefine what it means to be a real hero. Try this free sample lesson from the K-12 Giraffe Heroes Program.

Kids Care Clubs
http://www.kidscare.org
Dedicated to developing compassion and the spirit of charity in children. This organization provides children, families, schools, and religious groups with meaningful opportunities to help others in their local and global communities. Programs can set up an affiliate club.

The Laws of Life Essay Contest
http://www.lawsoflife.org
This project of the John Templeton Foundation offers young people the chance to reflect on and write about what they stand for. Participants identify the laws of life that mean the most to them, and explain their choices through the experiences they have had, the lessons they have learned, and the people who have served as living examples.

Learn and Serve
http://www.learnandserve.org/
A comprehensive information system that focuses on all dimensions of service-learning, covering kindergarten through higher education, school-based as well as community-based initiatives.

Learning To Give (K-12)
http://learningtogive.org/
Teaching the importance of voluntary action for the common good in a democratic society.

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation
www.actsofkindness.org
Access Teacher's Guides, lesson plans, activity ideas, teachers' experiences, and other materials to help you successfully incorporate kindness into your school.

Respectful Communication - Civility
http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/treatment/civilcom.htm
http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/civility.htm
These are two pages on the University of Colorado website with instructions on how to deal with difficult, long-lasting, and resolution-resistant conflicts.

Teaching Tolerance (for teachers)
http://www.tolerance.org/teach/
A national education project dedicated to helping teachers foster equity, respect, and understanding in the classroom and beyond. This website offers classroom activities as well as useful resources for teachers.

Wise Skills resource—Free Lessons
http://www.wiseskills.com/freeresources/samplepages.html
These free lessons serve up a generous variety of interconnected activities and experiences to help students develop good character.

Durlak, Joseph A., and Roger P. Weissberg. (2007). **The impact of after-school programs that promote personal and social skills.** Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).
A key piece of research supporting intentionally teaching social skills in afterschool.
http://casel.org/publications/the-impact-of-after-school-programs-that-promote-personal-and-social-skills/

Professional Development for Teachers

Watch the PA Keys Professional Development Calendar at www.pakeys.org for professional development events, like the ones listed below, in your region to support building resiliency in youth.

- The Good Behavior Game for School Age Programs
- Don't Laugh at Me
- Links to Learning: Social and Emotional Learning
- Links to Learning: Family Engagement
- Building Community and Teamwork
- Physical, Cognitive, Social and Emotional Development: Let's Explore the Four Areas of School Age Development- Implications for Programming
- Building Your Bounce
- Developing Social and Emotional Skills Through Games
- Mind in the Making for School Age Practitioners
- Positive Behavior Support