

# You Can Do It! Parenting Guide

## The 5 Keys for Children's Success and Well-Being



© 2007, Michael E. Bernard





## The 5 Keys for Children's Success and Well-Being

---



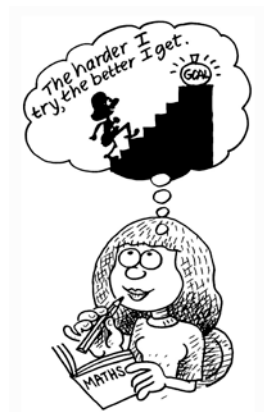
### The 5 Keys that Unlock Children's Potential

#### Confidence

Confidence requires that young people not be overly concerned with what others think if they make a mistake. Confidence is revealed when young people are not afraid to fail and are happy to meet someone new. Confidence involves young people having trust in themselves and believing that they will probably be successful in the end. Confident young people stand up straight, look people in the eye, and speak clearly and with a firm tone of voice.

#### Persistence

Persistence is revealed when young people try hard when doing school work they find frustrating and do not feel like doing, and finish their work on time. Young people who keep trying to complete an assignment rather than becoming distracted, and those who elect to play after they've done their work, demonstrate motivation and can be described as being persistent.



#### Organisation

Organisation is revealed when young people keep track of their assignments, schedule their time effectively, and set goals for how well they want to do in specific areas of their school work and in other endeavours. Organisation also means having all your supplies ready to do school work and having all your supplies ready a system for storing previously learned material.



#### Getting Along

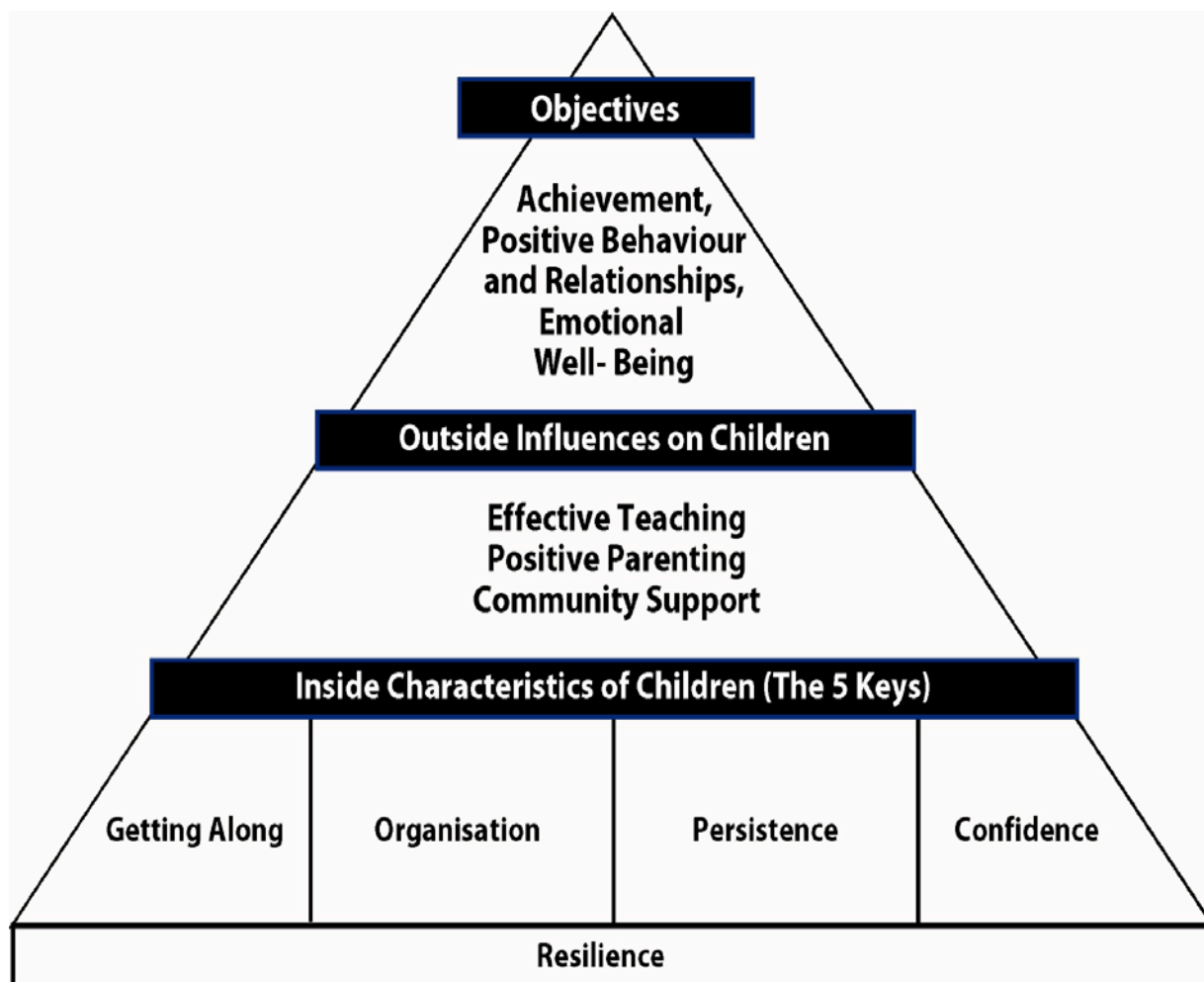
Getting Along is revealed when young people work cooperatively with each other, resolve conflicts by discussion rather than fights, manage their anger, show tolerance, and follow class rules, including making responsible choices so that everyone's rights are protected. Getting Along also involves young people making positive contributions to helping others and to making the school, home, and community safer, healthier, and good places to live and learn.

#### Resilience

Resilience is shown when young people are able to stop themselves from getting **extremely** angry, down, or worried when faced with challenging events and difficult situations and people. Resilience means being able to control your behaviour when very upset without fighting or withdrawing for too long. It also means being able to calm down after having been upset and bouncing back to work and being with other people.



## What the Research Says Children Need to Be Successful and Happy





## The Way Children Think

William Shakespeare wrote: "Things are neither good nor bad but thinking makes them so." It is now agreed that the way young people think about themselves, others and their world determines their Confidence, Persistence, Organisation, Getting Along, and Resilience.

We can use the example of the Howbaddzat? Catastrophe Scale to show how children's thinking about events determines their feelings and behaviours.

Have a look at the Howbaddzat? Catastrophe Scale. It represents different degrees of "badness" where 90-100 are things that are "awful and terrible", 50-90 are things that are "very bad", 10-50 are things that are "bad", and 0-10 are things that are "a bit bad".

Now, when children get extremely upset about something that happens to them that is bad but not the worst thing that could happen to them, they blow the event out of proportion and think to themselves: "This is the worst thing in the world – a real catastrophe."

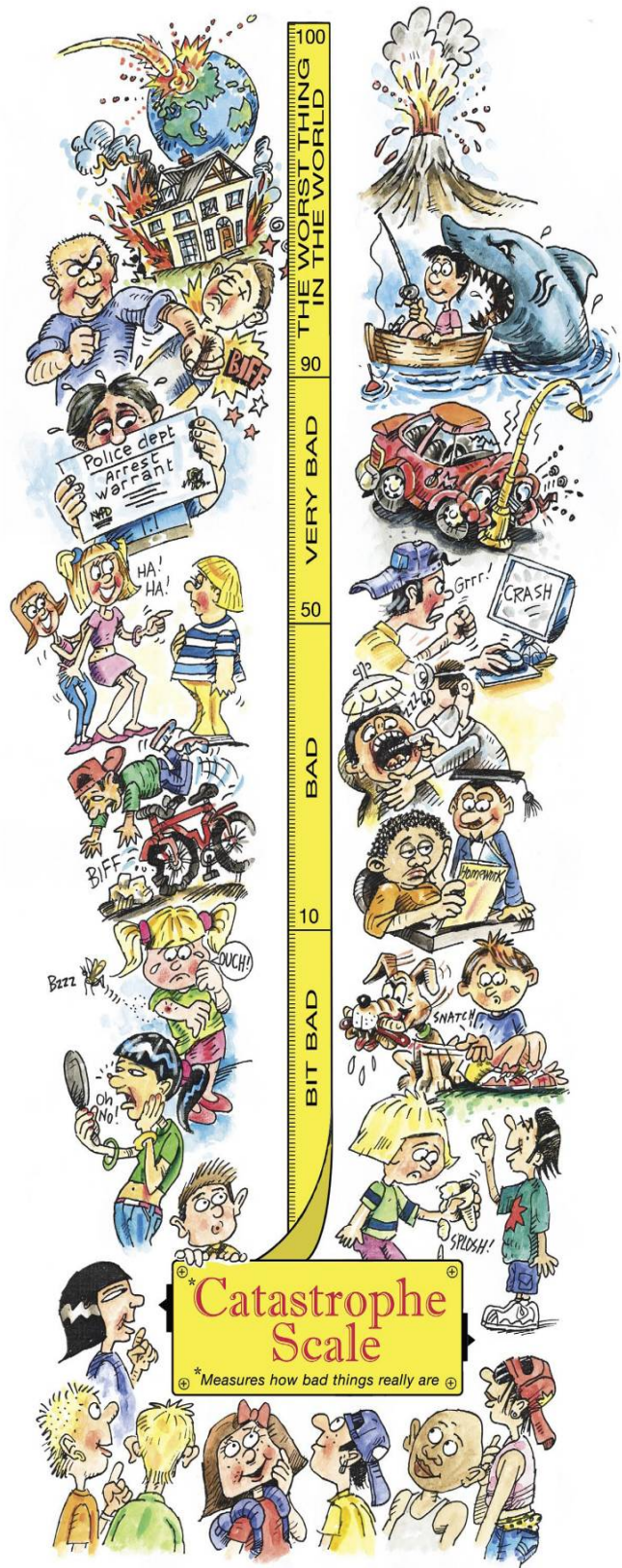
Here are some events that young people tend to blow out of proportion:

Making mistakes, not understanding the teacher, being called a silly name, someone cheating in a game, having to read for 30 minutes on a topic that is "boring", having to clean their room, doing homework, not being allowed to play until homework is done. When very upset about something, they show poor resilience by getting very upset and staying upset because they think: "This is the worst thing in the world – a real catastrophe."

We can help our children develop resilience by showing them the Howbaddzat? Catastrophe Scale and teaching them how not to blow the "badness" of events out of proportion.

# HOWBADZZAT?

It's not as bad  
as you think it is!



## Ways of Thinking

It has been discovered that there are 12 ways of thinking that help young people to be **Confident, Persistent, Organised, to Get Along**, and to be **Resilient**.

Using the images and descriptions below, see if you can judge how often your child tends to think in that way. Mark a box under each Habit of the Mind to show how often your child tends to think that way.



## The 12 Habits of the Mind



☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often

### 1. Accepting Myself

**Accepting Myself** means not thinking badly about yourself when you make a mistake or when someone is mean to you. Leads to **Confidence** and the absence of feeling worried and feeling down.



☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often

### 2. Taking Risks

**Taking Risks** means thinking that it's good to try something new even though you might make mistakes. Leads to **Confidence** and an absence of feeling worried about trying things that are hard.



☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often

### 3. Being Independent

**Being Independent** means thinking that it's important for you to try new activities and to speak up even if your classmates think you're silly or stupid. It means thinking that it's not awful when people laugh at what you do and knowing that "I can stand it." Leads to **Confidence** and an absence of worrying too much about what people think of you if you do something silly or stupid, or you stand up for yourself.



☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often

### 5. Giving Effort

**Giving Effort** means thinking that the harder you try, the greater your success will be. It means knowing that "effort" leads to success, rather than "luck". Leads to **Persistence** and an absence of procrastination and work avoidance.



☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often

### 4. I Can Do It

**I Can Do It** means thinking that even when your work is hard, you can probably still be successful. It means taking credit for when you are successful. It also means remembering the other things you are good at when you are not successful. Leads to **Confidence** and **Persistence** and an absence of feeling hopeless.

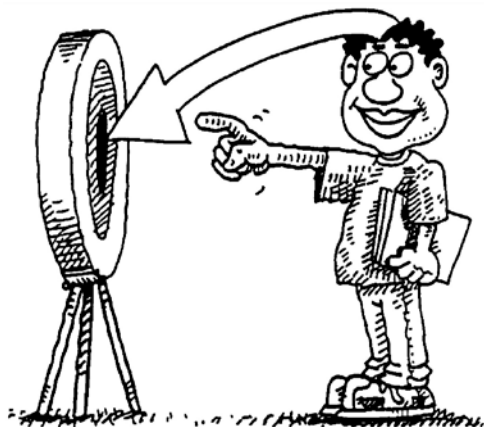


☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often

### 6. Working Tough

**Working Tough** means thinking that to be successful, you sometimes have to do things that are not easy or fun. Leads to **Persistence** and completing tasks that are dull, boring, and time-consuming.

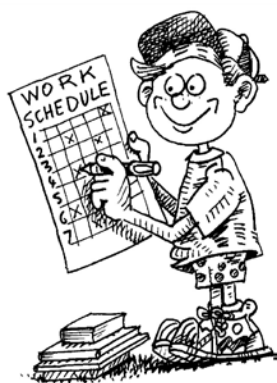




☐ Rarely   ☐ Sometimes   ☐ Often

## 7. Setting Goals

**Setting Goals** means thinking that setting a goal to do your best in school helps you be successful. It means thinking you have a better chance of achieving good marks when you set short-term goals. Leads to **Organisation** and not disturbing others and distracting others.



☐ Rarely   ☐ Sometimes   ☐ Often

## 8. Planning My Time

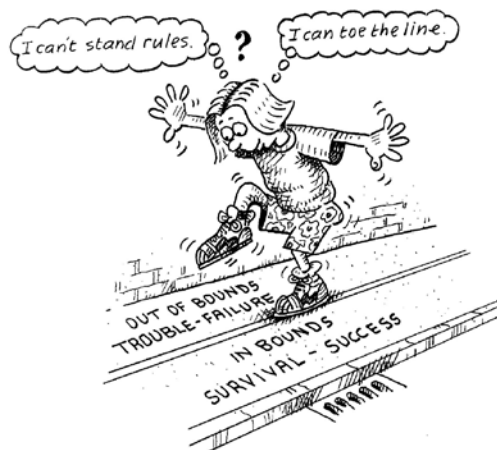
**Planning My Time** means thinking about making sure you understand what your teacher wants you to do before you start working and writing down when your homework is due. It means thinking about the different parts of the assignment and making sure you plan enough time to get each part done. Leads to **Organisation** and not being rushed or distractable, and not disturbing



☐ Rarely   ☐ Sometimes   ☐ Often

## 9. Being Tolerant of Others

**Being Tolerant of Others** means thinking that, when someone is mean to you or is different from you, he or she is *not* a totally bad person. It means thinking that you need to find out more about the person. It also means not wanting to "get back" at the person. Leads to **Getting Along** and an absence of anger and poor behaviour.



☐ Rarely   ☐ Sometimes   ☐ Often

## 10. Playing by the Rules

**Playing by the Rules** means thinking that by following school rules, school will be a better place to live and learn, and that you will stay out of trouble and be more successful if you do. Leads to **Getting Along** and not getting into trouble.



☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often

## 11. Thinking First

**Thinking First** means that when someone acts badly or unfairly, before you take action, you: (a) think of the alternative courses of action; (b) think of the consequences of different actions you can take; and (c) predict the impact your actions may have on the feelings of the other person. Leads to **Getting Along** and solving conflicts peacefully without fighting.



☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often

## 12. Social Responsibility

**Social Responsibility** means thinking that it's important to be caring, to try hard to do your best, to be fair to others, to make sure that everyone has the freedom to say what they think and feel without fear, to be honest and tell the truth, to have integrity by making sure that you do what you say you are going to do, to respect others and have nice manners, to act responsibly by making good choices, to sort out problems without fighting, to care about nature and other living things, and to be understanding and include others who are different. Leads to **Getting Along** and an absence of selfishness

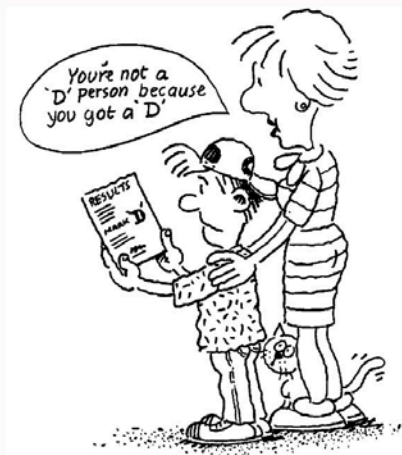
## Basic Equation for Teaching Children the Keys for Success and Happiness



Describe the Key



Describe examples  
of behaviour to practise



Teach Ways  
of Thinking



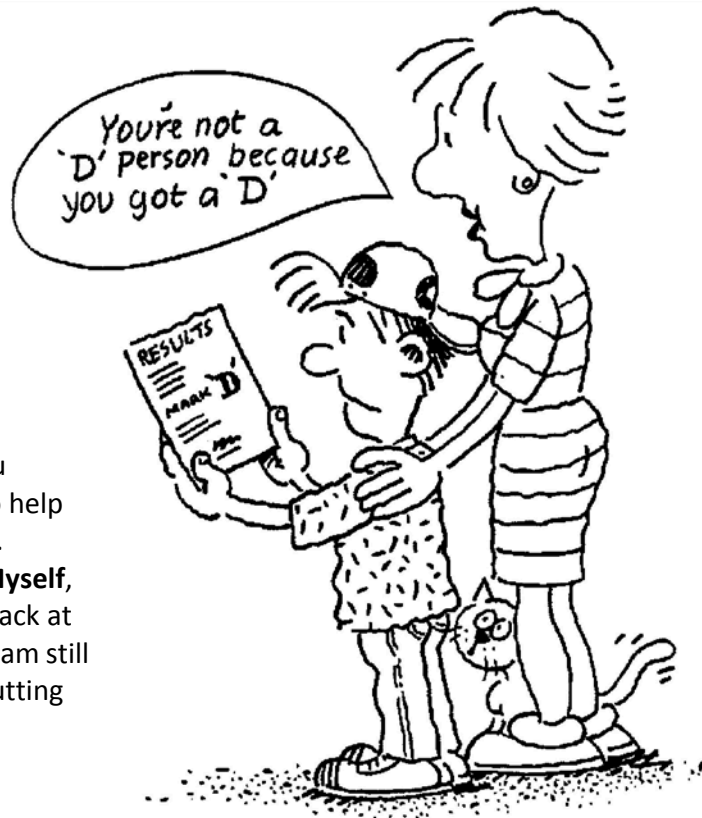
Provide Behaviour-Specific  
Feedback



Confidence, Persistence, Organisation,  
Getting Along, and Resilience

## How to Communicate to Your Child “Ways to Think”

1. Explain to your child a Way of Thinking that will help them to be successful and happy. In teaching **Accepting Myself**, say: “One good way to think when you’ve had a bit of a setback is to remind yourself of your good points and not put yourself down.”
2. Illustrate to your child how you can use the Way of Thinking to help you feel and behave positively. Again, in teaching **Accepting Myself**, say: “The last time I had a setback at work, I reminded myself that I am still capable and likeable. By not putting myself down, I was able to be resilient and stay confident.”
3. When your child has finished reading a story, watching a movie, or hearing about someone in the news, analyse one or more of the characters or important people in terms of the extent to which they displayed one or more Ways of Thinking to help them to be confident, persistent, organised, to get along, and/or to be resilient. For example, after your child has learned about the life of Ghandi, you can teach the Way of Thinking called **Tolerance of Others**, by saying: “What was Ghandi’s mindset or way of thinking that helped him to be non-violent and build a world of fairness and justice for all?”
4. Take opportunities when interacting with your child to make points that illustrate the Way of Thinking you wish to teach. For example, in teaching **Giving Effort**, with your child in hand, go out of your way to persist in finding something at home or out shopping that your child needs. Once found and after expending time and effort, say: “You see, the harder you try at something, the more successful you will be.”
5. Acknowledge someone at home for using a Way of Thinking you wish to teach. In teaching **Planning My Time**, you could praise one of your children (or partner) for scheduling important things ahead of time on a planner. Say: “John, I can see you are planning your time to stay on top of things. Being organised this way will help you get organised.”
6. Provide feedback to your child when he/she displays “signs” of using a positive Way of Thinking in a situation. In teaching **Working Tough**, say: “Mary, I know you thought you couldn’t stand doing anymore maths practice problems. But you see, you can really do things that you don’t feel like doing.”



## Confidence



### Confident Behaviour

- Chooses to participate in new activities
- Does hard work without asking for help
- Continues to work on a difficult assignment without asking for help
- Shares a new idea with teacher, class, or family
- Presents a "difficult" talk to class
- Introduces him/herself to someone new
- Speaks loudly and clearly when asking or answering a question
- When answering a question, provides a non-conforming, creative answer
- Greets adults with good eye contact and uses their name
- Offers to take responsibility for organising a family event

## Confidence

### Things to Say to Encourage Confident Behaviour

- "That took confidence."
- "That wasn't easy to do, but you did it."
- "You are not afraid to take risks."
- "You had a confident voice when you spoke."
- "You really stood up for what you believed!"
- "You were not afraid to make a mistake. Good for you."
- "Predicting success helps you get there."
- "You have a positive approach to your work."
- "You did not get too upset with yourself for not achieving a good result."
- "You looked confident."



### Teach the Following Types of Thinking

- **Accepting Myself:** Do not think badly of yourself when things go wrong.
- **Taking Risks:** When learning new things, do not be afraid to make mistakes.
- **Being Independent:** It is important to try new activities, even if other people think you are silly or stupid.
- **I Can Do It:** When trying difficult activities, it is helpful to think you are more likely to be successful than to fail.



## Persistence



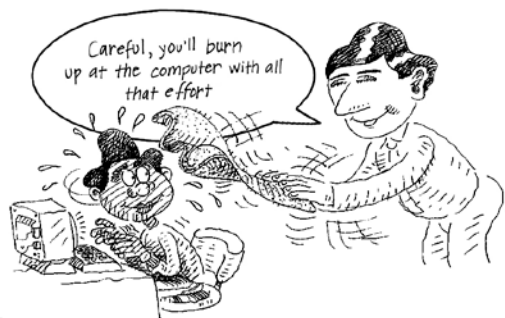
### Persistent Behaviour

- Continuing to try, even when schoolwork is hard
- Not being distracted by others
- Checking schoolwork when finished to make sure it is correct
- Trying and completing work found to be "boring"
- Finishing work instead of playing
- Not giving up too quickly
- Doing what you say you are going to do
- Returning phone calls
- Putting things away
- Trying as hard as you can to understand or complete something

## Persistence

### Things to Say to Encourage Persistent Behaviour

- "You didn't give up!"
- "You kept trying. Great effort."
- "Making that extra effort will help you learn."
- "You sure don't give up easily."
- "Your effort is so important. It will help you succeed."
- "See, persistence pays off."
- "I see you understand that to be successful, you sometimes have to do things you don't feel like doing."
- "The more you practise, the better you become."



### Teach the Following Types of Thinking

- **I Can Do It:** When trying difficult activities, it is helpful to think you are more likely to be successful than to fail.
- **Giving Effort:** The harder you try, the more successful you will be.
- **Working Tough:** To be successful in the future, you sometimes have to do things that are boring or not fun in the present.

## Organisation



### Organised Behaviour

- Brings home all materials needed for homework
- Brings homework and other important materials to class
- Gets started on class work right away
- Makes sure understands instructions before beginning work
- Keeps a neat desk and school bag and study area at home
- Has all school supplies ready
- Seems to plan enough time for completing homework on time and to review for quizzes/exams
- Finishes one activity and begins the next activity
- Knows schedule
- Listens when instructions are given
- Is aware of important "special events" at school

## Organisation

### Things to Say to Encourage Organised Behaviour

- "You are organised."
- "Doesn't it feel good to be organised?"
- "Being organised is helping you be successful."
- "You really planned well."
- "You really focussed to get your work in on time."
- "I bet it makes school easier when you have everything ready."
- "You are really keeping your backpack/book bag clean and neat."
- "I can see you are planning ahead so that you do not rush your work at the very last minute."
- "When you are prepared, you can do a good job."
- "You planned well. You finished on time."



### Teach the Following Types of Thinking

- Setting Goals: Setting a goal can help you to be successful.
- Planning My Time: Think about how long it will take to do your schoolwork, and plan enough time to get it done.

# Getting Along



## Getting Along Behaviour

- Works well with others
- Takes turn
- Listens when someone is talking
- Respects important school/home rules
- Helps someone with their work
- When faced with a problem, talks rather than fights
- Shares material
- Includes someone in a group activity
- Is courteous and kind to peers, teachers, and parents
- Helps others in need
- Is sensitive to the feelings of others
- Tells the truth
- Does things to make the community a better place to live

# Getting Along

## Things to Say to Encourage Getting Along Behaviour

- "You are a good listener."
- "You work well in a group."
- "Sharing helps you be a good friend."
- "You are a helpful person."
- "Solving this problem without fighting shows you are really getting along."
- "You have a real talent for getting along."
- "You are taking time to find out more about a person without judging them."
- "You think before you act. What a great attribute."
- "Empathy is being able to stand in someone's shoes. You try to see things from another's point of view."
- "You care about your community."



## Teach the Following Types of Thinking

- **Be Tolerant of Others:** Accept people who are different. Do not judge people who act wrongly as totally bad and deserving of punishment.
- **Think First:** When someone treats you badly, think about the different ways you can act, the consequences of what you plan to do, and how your actions affect another person's feelings.
- **Play by the Rules:** By following important school/home rules, you will live in a better and safer place where everyone can learn.
- **Be Socially Responsible:** Be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others, act honestly, and help make your community a safer and better place to live and learn

## Resilience



### Resilience Behaviour

- Does not get too down when schoolwork results are not good
- Keeps trying in the face of setbacks
- Handles teasing or social difficulties without getting too upset
- Manages frustration when he/she does not understand something right away
- Manages frustration of having a lot of work to do
- Controls anger when treated unfairly
- Manages nerves when taking exams or performing in public
- Is able to say “no” and stand up to negative peer pressure
- Calms down quickly after getting very upset

## Resilience

### Things to Say to Encourage Resilience Behaviour

- “You didn’t let yourself get too angry.”
- “You’ve learned how not to get too nervous.”
- “You didn’t let that setback stop you from trying.”
- “Even though you didn’t do as well as you wanted, you are still positive.”
- “You seem not to have blown that negative event out of proportion.”
- “Keeping your cool helps.”
- “You see, you can get through the tough stuff.”
- “You chose not to upset yourself about what happened.”



### Teach Your Child the Following When Faced with Difficulty

- To think: “This is bad but it could be a lot worse.”
- To think: “I don’t like this, but I can stand this.”
- To think: I won’t think badly of myself. I’m still me – valuable and capable.”
- To think: “I won’t judge this person by his/her behaviour.”
- To think: “Sometimes, for me to be successful, I have to do things that are not fun and exciting.”
- To relax, find someone to talk to, and to



## The 5 Keys For Children's Success and Well-Being

---