

THE POWER OF RESILIENCE

Good Afternoon. And welcome to my world – the world of Early Childhood Education.

Today as you approached the Garvin Theatre, you saw six tables on the patio relating to the growth and development of young children.

There was a table about the **Physical Domain** – the small and large motor development of young children as well as a focus on health and safety factors, nutrition and adequate rest and relaxation.

Another table focused on the **Cognitive Domain** – the skills we practice in how we take in information, process and analyze it, store it, and recall it while maintaining a sense of wonder.

A third table featured the **Language Domain** – the system of communication that we use to express our needs, wants, thoughts, and ideas in the context of active experiences.

A fourth table was on the **Social Domain** – opportunities for learning socially desirable behaviors as well as social skills such as empathy, respect, cooperation and understanding the rights of self and others.

Another table focused on the **Emotional Domain** – in the context of a safe environment, how we cope with and express our emotions in appropriate ways and where a positive sense of self and character occur.

The last table was the **Creative Domain** – enhancing self-esteem and a feeling of self-worth through opportunities to express ideas and emotions with the use of free-form materials, open-ended experiences, and non-traditional thinking.

As you entered the Garvin Theatre, you heard the music of Red Grammer and his young friends. On the patio, in the theatre lobby, and on stage with me are seven pieces of original art. My thanks to the teachers and children who attend The Orfalea Early Learning Center, the lab school for the students in the Early Childhood Education Department. My thanks to the children and teachers at Quality Time Child Development Center for their participation in today's activities. And my thanks to Lincoln for her important contribution to this event.

With this atmosphere, we celebrate the SPIRIT of children as April is Month of the Young Child. Let us be reminded of the importance of the early years in a child's life and what we do to assist children in their personal process of growth and development.

In this uniquely individual as well as somewhat universal process of growth and development, how do children learn what they learn? How do children learn what to do and when? There are **METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION** that guide children in the process of learning about who they are and who they want to become. These methods of socialization include the following:

ATTACHMENT
OBSERVATION AND MODELING
LEARN BY DOING
FEEDBACK
INSTRUCTION AND REASONS
PEER PRESSURE
CULTURE

As the process of growth and development unfolds, it is important to be mindful of what we want for children. What is it that we aspire for them to learn? What is it that we desire they accomplish? What tools will they need for their journey? The **AIMS OF SOCIALIZATION** include the following:

**TO HAVE A POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM
TO DEVELOP A SENSE OF SELF-DISCIPLINE
TO DEVELOP A SENSE OF PRODUCTIVITY
TO LEARN SOCIAL ROLES
TO LEARN SOCIAL RULES
TO LEARN DEVELOPMENTAL SKILLS**

AND TO LEARN TO BE RESILIENT

Our focus today is on the last aim of socialization – to learn to be resilient, a skill we have to be taught.

What is Resilience?

Defined by Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg, *Resilience* is the capacity to rise above difficult circumstances, allowing children to exist in this less-than-perfect world, while moving forward with optimism and confidence.

Let's take a closer look at this definition Dr. Ginsburg has given us. **First, Rise Above Difficult Circumstances.** As much as anyone of us would wish we could make things easier for the children in our lives, we cannot do that. We cannot protect children 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from the challenges of growing up. Life is not always easy or convenient. And it does not always come in a big box with a pretty bow on top. We must have the tools to cope with and move forward with whatever circumstances we find ourselves in. The same is true for children. **Next, Less-Than-Perfect-World.** Our world is not perfect. Sometimes it is not fair. And sometimes it down-right stinks. What do we do? Do we sit on the couch in our favorite pajamas and invite over our new best friends Ben and Jerry? Or do we have the tools to recognize the problem, identify potential solutions, make a decision and act on it, and continue to reflect and assess our progress? The choices we make impact who we are, how we see ourselves, and how others see us. **Lastly, Moving Forward with Optimism and Confidence.** In the

midst of our world falling apart, are we still able to maintain a positive outlook and know that we are still able to move forward – even if it is only a few steps at a time? How do I do that? Is it a sign of weakness to admit I need help? Do I have people that I can turn to that will help me re-build my self-esteem?

Resilience is the HOPE that Life gets better, that Life has purpose, and that Life has meaning.

Based on his research, Dr. Ginsburg has identified seven different components of Resilience.

Competence

Confidence

Connection

Character

Contribution

Coping

Control

We are going to look at each one. I will provide you with a description as well as some examples to illustrate the key concepts. As you go along with me on this journey, be sure to reflect on each component as it relates to yourself. Start with you. Secondly, reflect on each component as it relates to the child or children who are in your life. It does not matter what role you play in the life of a child – parent, coach, music teacher, tutor, godfather, or best aunt ever. What matters is what you do in that role that helps support a child's growth and development.

SO LET'S BEGIN.

First is **COMPETENCE**.

Description – the ability to master a task. Competence is rooted in real-life experience. Competence is cumulative.

NOTES

1. It sounds simple.
2. Think about this from a child's perspective.
3. Examples - tying shoes, riding a bike, solving math problems, reading a book.

Angela - Examples and Stories

Welcome

Where did you grow up?

When you think of your family, who do you think of?

And what do they provide for you? And you for them?

What 2 or 3 adjectives would you use to describe your childhood/adolescence?

How did you learn **COMPETENCE**?

How do you see **COMPETENCE** in your life today?

Reflections

Do you help a child focus on his/her strengths? Or do you focus on her/his mistakes?

How do you help a child build authentic skills that make him/her competent in the real world?

Do you praise in a way that notices effort rather than rewards the product?

Next is **CONFIDENCE**.

Description – a solid belief in one’s own abilities.

NOTES

1. Emphasize solid and authentic
2. Relate to Competence
3. Not just because I say so or an adult is supposed to say so.

Darrell - Examples and Stories

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How did you learn **CONFIDENCE**?

How do you see **CONFIDENCE** in your life today?

Reflections

How do you express that you expect the best of him/her?

Do you “catch” a child when she/he is doing the right thing?

How do you encourage a child to strive just a little bit further because you believe he/she can succeed?

Third is **CONNECTION**.

Description – close ties to family, school, and community that provide reassurance that each child will be OK despite tough times; provide a deep-seated sense of security.

NOTES

1. ECE is about relationships.
2. Family first – makes sense
3. As world expands, school, teachers, community adults
4. Result – who to go to for help?

Bruce – Examples and Stories

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How did you learn **CONNECTION**?

How do you see **CONNECTION** in your life today?

Reflections

How do you build a safe community for a child?

Have you created a common sharing space so children and adults share time together?

How do you encourage children to take pride in the various groups they belong to?

Next is **CHARACTER**.

Description – a fundamental sense of right and wrong to ensure that each child is prepared to make smart choices, contribute to the world, and become a stable adult.

NOTES

1. As a child grows/develops, sense of right/wrong evolves
2. Good/bad to look at situation from different perspectives
3. Use critical thinking skills

Esther – Examples and Stories

Welcome

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And what do they provide for you? And you for them?

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How did you learn **CHARACTER**?

How do you see **CHARACTER** in your life today?

Reflections

How do you help a child recognize he/she is a caring person?

How do you model for a child how important it is to care for others?

How do you promote the belief that when all of us strive to achieve our fullest potential all of us benefit?

Fifth is **CONTRIBUTION**.

Description – the observable, physical act of making the world a better place.

NOTES

1. Focus – others and doing/observable
2. Result – a better place
3. Start – keep it within your world
4. Simple acts of kindness

Dolores – Examples and Stories

Welcome

Where did you grow up?

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And what do they provide for you? And you for them?

What 2 or 3 adjectives would you use to describe your childhood/adolescence?

How did you learn **CONTRIBUTION**?

How do you see **CONTRIBUTION** in your life today?

Reflections

How do you make clear to a child that she/he can make the world a better place?

Do you create opportunities for a child to contribute to her/his community? And are they included in this planning process?

How do you share how important a value it is to help others?

Next is **COPING**.

Description – the ability to handle stressful situations effectively and appropriately.

NOTES

1. Two key words
2. Effectively – chosen strategies must work – do what helps you
3. Appropriately – Age 2 and Age 12 and Age 22 and Age 52 - evolving

Josh - Examples and Stories

Welcome

Where did you grow up?

When you think of your family, who do you think of?

And what do they provide for you? And you for them?

What 2 or 3 adjectives would you use to describe your childhood/adolescence?

How did you learn **COPING**?

How do you see **COPING** in your life today?

Reflections

Do you recognize that many of the risk behaviors children engage in are attempts at reducing stress or pain in their lives?

How do you model for children positive, effective coping strategies?

How do you create an environment in which talking, sharing, listening is safe?

Last is **CONTROL**.

Description – the need for appropriate guidelines; the ability to have a voice in personal decisions

NOTES

1. Two Parts
2. Appropriate guidelines – all children need – not all the same
3. What is the clear expectation?
4. Voice – have a say so
5. Developmentally appropriate
6. Examples – age 3 – clothes; age 12 – curfew; a sense of power

Paula – Examples and Stories

Welcome

Where did you grow up?

When you think of your family, who do you think of?

And what do they provide for you? And you for them?

What 2 or 3 adjectives would you use to describe your childhood/adolescence?

How did you learn **CONTROL**?

How do you see **CONTROL** in your life today?

Reflections

How do you help a child recognize her/his mini-successes so he/she can believe that she/he can succeed?

How do you help a child think about his/her future by taking one step at a time?

How do you model control in your own life?

Finally, I have given you much to reflect on. And I know today, tomorrow, next week, even next month, you will be continuing to reflect on these ideas. In addition, I am sure you will be talking with many people about different ideas, examples, stories that you have heard today. However, what is most important to a child is what you do.

In your everyday world, what are you going to do that supports a child in being competent, having confidence, being connected, demonstrating character, making a contribution, coping appropriately, and exercising control? It is a simple question.

What are you going to do?

THANK YOU.