



Positive Outlook

“Children SEE – Children DO”

RIRO Resilience Activity Module for Parents & Children (birth to 7 years)

INTRODUCTION

This module contains fun activities for parents and children that promote resilience by supporting a positive outlook. Each activity takes less than 20 minutes. The activities can be done “as is” or be accompanied by discussion about the importance of maintaining a positive outlook. This module complements the *Keep Trying*, *Understanding Feelings* and *Participation & Helping Out* modules.

RESOURCES in the MODULE

- “GRAB & GO” – activities for facilitators working with individual parents and children (pp.1-2)
- **Group activities** – plus homework, other resiliency resources and engagement strategies (pp. 3-5)
- **Parent Tip Sheet and Poster** – parent handout with ideas on activities that support positivity (pp. 6-7)

KEY CONCEPTS

- Developing positive views of challenges and seeing strengths in others support our resilience.
- Looking for positive things about a child increases appreciation for the child and builds the parent-child relationship.
- Parents can show children positives and beauty in their world and how to look for strengths in others.
- When parents model a positive outlook in everyday life, children learn to look for the positives, too.

MATERIALS NEEDED (depending on chosen activity)

- Paper and pen
- Large paper or board for group activities/ green paper for leave
- Parent Tip Sheet

PREPARATION/ONLINE RESOURCES about RESILIENCE

<http://www.reachinginreachingout.com>

<http://www.reachinginreachingout.com/parents>

ACTIVITIES

While these are meant to be fun activities, parents may find it helpful if facilitators explain: 1) the role that a positive outlook has in development of resilience, and 2) how children learn to see positive things by watching their parents find positives in everyday life.

#1: “Three Good Things”

Parent

- Identify three good things about his/her child
OR
- Identify three good things about the day
- Identify three good things about him/herself as a parent
- Identify three good things about parent’s neighbourhood, cultural identity, food, etc.



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Parent and child

- Have parent review the day with child and identify three good things.
- The good things can be things they saw, did, or that happened, etc.

#2: *Looking for Beauty in Nature* (with younger children)

Parent and child

- Gather up 1 or 2 cardboard toilet paper rolls (or paper towel roll) and show the child how to look through the rolls to see “positive” things, e.g., clear blue sky, pretty flower, fluffy cloud, chirping bird, butterfly, etc.

#3: *Search and Find*

Parent and child

- Find three positive things in an event that is happening to the family, in an action the child does, in the child's temperament, in the parent's responses, in future possibilities, in family, community, in a magazine article, etc.

#4: *Tomorrow is Another Good Day*

Parent and child

- Think of three positive things to look forward to later today or tomorrow (depending on child's age).
- Think of three hopes for the child's future.

#5: *Parent and Infant Activities*

- Try different faces, noises or movements to see what makes the infant smile.



GROUP ACTIVITIES

NOTE: These activities are designed for professionals and paraprofessionals who have completed RIRO Skills Training Program and who have group facilitation experience.

Parent group (no children)

Option 1:

- Have parents individually reflect on (and possibly write down) three “good” things about their children and about themselves as parents. If parents are having difficulty, after a time, the leader may suggest areas to consider (listed under “Things you could point out”).
- Discuss positives participants come up with, if they are willing. Ask if they have thought about these “good” things before. Have they ever mentioned the good things to their children (whether or not the child is old enough to understand)?
- Discuss good times to point out the positives with their children (e.g., bedtime, transition times).

Option 2:

- Ask parents to come up with good things that have happened today in the community (from news or personal experience) and write on flip chart paper (if possible).
- Discuss (if appropriate) the tendency to find the negatives (which may be evident in the group's answers or in difficulties coming up with answers).
- Discuss the importance of finding the positives (see information under “key concepts”).

Parent-child group

- Have parent-child dyads come up with three “good” things about the day or the child.
- If desired, the children and parents can share the list and the leader can make a big list of all the good things (perhaps tallying the ones that are mentioned more than once).
- (Optional) Have children and parents draw or write “good” things on leaf cutouts and put all together as “community tree” of good things.

Facilitators’ suggestions

- This group is short, so you may want to plan other activities or topics for a longer group.

TAKE HOME OPTIONS (for individual parents or groups to use every day)

- Watch child with the intent of finding positive things about the child upon which to comment and tell child about them. *“Catch your child being good.”* Group leader may suggest positive things to look for in children (see “Things you could point out”).
- Find three “good” things in stories – *don’t forget the “little things”* – they can make a big difference.
- Keep a list of good things – post on the fridge or other visible place.
- Make “thinking a positive thought” part of the bedtime routine.
- Have a “stop and appreciate time.” This can be especially effective during transition times. *What did we like about what we just did/saw/ate? What can we look forward to next?*

For parents and infants

- Ask parent to smile at his/her baby every day.
- Ask parent to notice what makes the baby smile.
- Ask parent to notice what the baby does that makes the parent smile.

THINGS PARENTS CAN SAY TO THEIR CHILDREN

- *"I like it... (e.g., when you listen, play with your sister gently, work on your puzzle)."*
- *"Wasn't it good when... (e.g., we got to go outside, you were proud of yourself, we got to see the squirrel, etc.)."*
- *"Even though... (e.g., the weather is too cold to go outside, we can watch the snow from the window; that needle hurt, you are now protected from some sicknesses)."*

SUGGESTED OPENINGS/ APPROACHES with PARENT and CHILD

Role modeling positive features...

Role model with parent (examples):

- *"When I was waiting for the bus, I was impatient. Then I got to feel the warmth of the sun and had an interesting conversation with another passenger. There is always something good you can find if you look – although sometimes you have to look a lot!"*
- *"I see that your child is: (watching you closely/ friendly with me/ letting you know when he is upset/ patient and doesn't give up on the first try/ reaching for objects now)."*

Role model with parent and child (examples):

- *"Know what? Something good happened today. I got to have yogurt for lunch and I love yogurt!"*
- *"What good thing has happened for you today?" "I wonder if (caregiver) can think of something good."*

Questions you could ask...

- *"Let's think about what is good about your child, OK?"*
- *"I see this, do you? What else?"*
- *"Can you tell me some good things about your child that I have not had a chance to see yet?"*
- *"What good things have been happening since I last saw you?"*

Things you could say...

- *"Taking time to think of the good things, as well as the bad, is a simple way to feel more positive about our lives. It helps decrease the chance of developing depression and increases the chances that a child will bounce back when bad things happen. Let's look at three good things today that you can share with your child."*

Things you could point out...

About the child:

- looking to parent for confirmation or affection
- doing developmental tasks (especially a new task)
- trying to solve problems

About the parent:

- being concerned for the child/ wanting the child to be good
- responding to the child with kind voice tone or touch
- knowing things about his/her child

About the community:

- recreation/ fun opportunities
- anything good in the news

If parent only finds negatives (or “shoulds” or “awfulizes”), here’s an example of what you could say:

“You are really good at being aware of what is not going right/ the challenges/ bad things. But even though there are bad things, I bet we can find some good things. I heard you say that your child got angry when another child took his toy. It’s good that your child has a sense of fairness.”

Remember “descriptive feedback” and modeling both support positive and flexible thinking and help us accept mistakes.

OTHER RESOURCES

Books

- Hewitt, D. & Heidemann, S. **The Optimistic Classroom** (1998)
- RIRO “Children’s Booklists” to support resilience:
www.reachinginreachingout.com/resources-booksKids.htm
- Selected books that support a positive outlook:

Dennis Wyeth, S., **Something Beautiful** (1998)

Despite the conditions of despair so evident in her neighbourhood, a young girl actively searches for “something beautiful” and finds plenty of positives in the hearts and actions of the community people. (Recommended for children 5 yrs.+)

Henkes, K., **A Good Day** (2007)

Frustration, disappointment and fear can make the day look pretty bad. But noticing the positive things can make the day feel good! (Recommended for children 2 yrs.+)

Osborne, M., **One Gorgeous Baby** (2001)

Mom and baby count the things that give them joy throughout the day. (Recommended for children birth to 2 yrs.)

Rice, L., **Because Brian Hugged His Mother** (1999)

Showing appreciation and kindness goes a long way to making the world a better place. (Recommended for children 4 yrs.+)

Tankard, J., **Grumpy Bird** (2007)

A young bird wakes up on the wrong side of the bed, but his mood changes when he experiences the positivity of his friends. (Recommended for children 2 yrs.+)

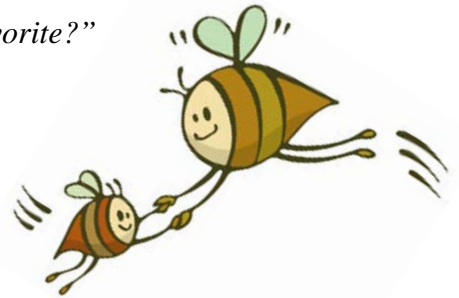


Positive Outlook

When parents show a positive outlook, children learn how, too.
Seeing strengths and positives helps us handle life's challenges and gives us hope.

SHARE a "positive outlook" with your child...

- **Point out your child's positive behavior and strengths**
 - *"You and your sister are sharing so well. You're really having fun together!"*
 - *"You waited very patiently. It's hard to wait, and you did it!"*
- **Find positives in daily events**
 - *"Getting up early in the morning is hard, but it gives us time to talk."*
 - *"I'm looking forward to the fun we'll have at the park together."*
- **Talk about things that you enjoy**
 - *"The brown puppy is my favorite. Which is your favorite?"*
 - *"I like working on puzzles with you."*
- **Express your positive feelings**
 - *"I feel happy about spending time together."*
 - *"I felt good when I... fixed the cabinet door, finished the laundry, etc."*



ASK your child to find the positives...

- *"What did you like about... going to the park, going to the market, etc.?"*
- *"Tell me three good things that happened today."*

PAUSE and THINK of positive things at different times during the day...

- mealtime
- bedtime
- first thing in the morning
- outside in nature
- reading or playing with your child

AND babies and toddlers, too!

- Smile at your baby throughout the day.
- Find things that make your baby smile.



More FREE online resources to build your child's resilience

www.reachinginreachingout.com/parents (videos, books, parent stories, articles, newsletter and more)



Look for strengths & "positives"!