



SPARK Resilience

Information for parents and carers

Your child is taking part in a new wellbeing programme, *SPARK Resilience*, this year. Here's some information about it so that you know a bit more about what they'll be learning in the sessions.

We hear the word 'resilience' a lot these days, but what does it actually mean?

It's about being able to 'bounce back' from difficulties, and being able to deal with stress. It's also about managing strong feelings, and building on what we're best at.

SPARK Resilience consists of an introductory session and ten main sessions delivered by your child's teacher, and has three core elements to it:

- Mindfulness activities
- Resilience-boosting activities
- The SPARK process to analyse and challenge our ways of thinking

Mindfulness involves being 'in the moment', paying full attention and awareness to yourself through simple exercises, including breathing and visualisation. It's been shown to be very effective in helping to manage strong feelings, and boosting wellbeing.

Resilience-boosting activities. Your child will create their own 'Resilience Portfolio' where they write or draw people and things which support them, their character strengths and things they're good at, using the phrases 'I have...', 'I am...', 'I can...' and 'I like...'. They'll look at how they can build on these, in activities called the 'Resilience gym'. You can help them by making suggestions to add to their portfolio.

The SPARK process is a technique children learn to challenge unhelpful ways of thinking. It stands for Situation – Perception – Autopilot – Reaction – Knowledge. Our perception of a situation, or the way we see it, affects the way we feel about it, and how we act as a result.

In the programme, common ways of thinking are represented by 'Parrots of Perception' – imaginary creatures who sit on our shoulder and whisper in our ear! Some of them are negative, like 'the Blamer' or 'the Worrier' – others are positive, like 'the Confident' or 'the Optimist'.

Children learn to identify and challenge their 'parrots', so that they can see and react to situations in more helpful ways, and build on this for future challenges.

Studies on previous versions of the programme in London and Tokyo showed it was effective in boosting children's resilience and self-esteem, and improving their mental health.

Please support your child when they have activities to do at home, and ask them how you can help them to add to their Resilience Portfolio!



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