

Kindy Kids Connect Program: Cultivating Resilience & Sense of Belonging in Children

There is strong evidence that indicates that building resilience in early childhood helps children to develop skills to overcome obstacles and reduce anxiety or other stress-related disorders later in life. While some degree of anxiety is normal when starting school, building a child's resilience to cope with everyday challenges and difficult experiences correlates with thriving academically and socially.

The 'Kindy Kids Connect' Program is a flexible, components-based framework that focuses on building and strengthening resilience and connectedness in children through early school-based intervention. Relying on evidence-based factors that promote resilience such as positive relationships, sense of belonging, social and emotional skills, and a sense of mastery. The program adopts an early intervention 'wrap around' approach, supporting and upskilling parents and teachers along with direct support for children via face-to-face learning opportunities.

We have tailored the Kindy Kids Connect program into two parts:

Part 1 - Resources for parents, caregivers, and teachers

A positive parent-child relationship is the foundation to fostering resilience in children. When parents understand resilience, they can be proactive about promoting children's resilience as early as possible so that children are socially and emotionally prepared to deal with setbacks and problems when they arise. We want to help parents understand that they cannot protect children from challenging moments, instead building their resilience in preparation for navigating challenges is key.

A series of psychoeducative flyers for parents and caregivers has been developed and will be delivered electronically via school newsletter or in hardcopy format. The aim is to provide parents and teachers with resources that help cultivate resilience and strengthen relationships so that children feel supported and connected. The topics covered in the parental resources will complement the weekly classroom-based skills building sessions for children.

Part 2 - Classroom based skills building component

We have designed 4 classroom-based sessions on social and emotional learning that can be delivered by school counsellors, Pastoral Support Workers and with the assistance of Teachers. The following topics are linked to the NSW PDHPE K-6 Syllabus – Health, Wellbeing and Relationships & Healthy, Safe and Active Lifestyles.

1. Help seeking and safety – encouraging and fostering help seeking behaviours to keep children safe.
2. Recognising emotions – help children identify basic emotions by teaching them to observe and reflect on physical signs, such as feelings in the body.
3. Building coping skills – self regulation through exercises such as deep breathing.
4. Connections and social skills – developing pro-social skills. Good emotional and social skills is crucial to academic success.

