



Participation & Helping Out

“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 encouraging involvement and helping others which contribute to a sense of belonging and meaning in our lives. Each activity takes less than 20 minutes. The activities can be done “as is” or be accompanied by discussion about the importance of helping others. This module complements the *Understanding Feelings* and *Keep Trying* modules.

RESOURCES in this 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 participation and helping

KEY CONCEPTS

- Getting involved and helping others supports resilience in ourselves and others.
- Doing something for others creates a sense of connection and self-efficacy.
- Parents can coach children to become involved, help others and participate in activities.
- When parents model helping, children learn to help, participate, and feel that they belong.

MATERIALS NEEDED (depending on activity)

- Paper and pencil (crayon, marker)
- Paper and craft materials (may be useful for group activities)
- Parent Tip Sheet

PREPARATION/ ONLINE RESOURCES

www.reachinginreachingout.com (RIRO professional resources)

www.reachinginreachingout.com/resources-parents-responsibility.htm



ACTIVITIES

While these are meant to be fun activities, parents may find it helpful if facilitators explain: 1) the role that participation and helping play in the development of resilience, and 2) how children learn to help out by watching their parents help others in everyday life.

#1: “Card Making”

Parent

- Discuss possible opportunities with parent to reach out to others in his/her family and community, even in small ways.

- Point out small acts of kindness such as:
 - picking up something that a person has dropped
 - helping a friend struggling to juggle a child, diaper bag and baby by offering to hold one of them.
- Suggest simple activities like making a card or doing one of the activities in the “Take Home Options” section (p. 4).
- Assist the parent to develop a plan to do a “helping” activity with his/her child.
 - For example, identify a person for whom the child could make a card
 - Parent could also make a card for the child so the child has a reminder that the parent is thinking of her/him.

Parent and child

- Using paper and writing implements, have parent help child make a card for someone s/he knows. The child can draw and parent can also draw and/or write the words.
- “Thank You” cards could be made for a helpful person in the family’s community (e.g., volunteer driver, neighbor, etc.).
- “Best Wishes” or “Get Well” cards could be made for someone who could use a little support.
- To make a card with a baby, trace the baby’s hand to make a special “Thank-you” card.

#2: “Participating”

Parent

- Have the parent think of ways s/he can encourage the child to do daily activities with the parent such as:
 - folding and sorting laundry
 - carrying things to the table
 - picking a story at bedtime.
- Have parent think of ways to show the child how the parent appreciates his/her help:
 - Smile.
 - Say “Thanks.”
 - Tell child, “I like it when you help.”

Parent and child

- Have parent draw a circle on the paper. Have parent ask the child to help draw a person.
- Ask parent to encourage the child to:
 - draw on paper, too (for ages 1-2 years)
 - draw inside the circle (for ages 2-3 years)
 - draw a face (for ages 3-4 years)
 - draw a body (for ages 4-5 years+)
- The parent can add more to the drawing, if preferred.
- Have parent thank child for participating.



GROUP ACTIVITIES

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

Parent group (no children)

Option 1:

- Start by having participants list all the people with whom they have weekly contact. Making a group list will underscore everyone's community connections and demonstrate that they are helping each other work towards a common goal.
- The list can also be done individually, through reflection only or by writing, depending on the group.

Option 2:

- Have participants identify someone that helped them, especially with their children, and discuss how that person helped.
- Facilitator leads a brief discussion about how doing things for others builds self-efficacy, empathy and feeling good about one's self. (This is an option that almost everyone has open to them – to feel competent and good about themselves.)
- Facilitator or group can pick a person from the list.
- The group can brainstorm simple ways to help people or their community with the purpose of being a role model for their children.
- Help group brainstorm how the parents could help their children do things for the person.
- Facilitator can give options of making a card, other activities or one of the “Take Home Options”.

Parent-child group

- Through brief discussion, the facilitator introduces the group to how doing things for others builds self-efficacy, empathy and feeling good about one's self.
- Have parent-child dyads decide on someone they know that would like a card.
- Use available materials to make cards. (Although it can be fun to have a range of materials available, limited materials can emphasize the point that you don't need much to be able to give. Using materials that would otherwise be thrown away or recycled also shows that things can be used in different ways and there is even good in “trash”).
- Facilitator may model “descriptive feedback” with participants while they are working.
- Facilitator may also have opportunities to demonstrate flexible thinking and accepting mistakes.
- Participants (parents and children, if children old enough) can share with the group why they picked that person.
- Children can make another card while parents discuss other ways that they can help their children develop a “helping habit.”

THINGS PARENTS CAN SAY TO THEIR CHILDREN

- *“It feels good to help.”*
- *“Families help each other.”*
- *“It's important to help out in our community.”*



“TAKE HOME” OPTIONS (for individual parents or groups)

Ask parent to:

- Give his/her child a task that contributes to the family – like passing out snacks or helping parent with cleaning.
- Help the child contribute to the community and also see the parent contribute to the community, e.g., picking up trash, saying “hello” to store clerk, putting out food for the birds, helping with community events.
- Comment about things the parent does to help others and how it makes the parent feel.

SUGGESTED OPENINGS/ APPROACHES with PARENT and CHILD

Role modeling...

Role model with parent (example):

- *“It looks like (child) needs a diaper change. Let me help you with that....it feels good to be able to help.”*

Role model with parent and child (examples):

- *“Who do you know that would like to know someone is thinking about them?”*
- *“You can do something to help!”*
- *“What can we get involved in today?”*

Questions you could ask...

- *“Does your child get a chance to do things for other people?” “Do you?” “Can we take a moment and come up with ways to give your child a chance to help others?”*

Things you could say...

- *“Doing things for others helps children recognize other people’s feelings and needs.”*
- *“Letting your child start early to help others helps them to feel good about him/herself and abilities.”*
- *“You may have to help by finding things that you and your child can do together to work with others.”*

Things you could point out...

- Direct parent to things that s/he can do *with* the child to help others, not things that the child does *for* the parent.
- It may be possible to tie in making a card with a cultural event or national holiday to increase the sense of connectedness and cultural competence.
- Role model “descriptive feedback” during activity for both parent and child.
- Have parent and child brainstorm about what the card recipient might like/or needs to hear.

OTHER RESOURCES

Books

- RIRO’s online “Children’s Booklists” to support resilience:
<http://www.reachinginreachingout.com/resources-booksKids.htm>
- Selected children’s books about helping:

Cousins, L., **Maisy Cleans Up** (2002)

Charley lends a hand to Maisy on cleaning day. When all the work is done, the friends sit down to enjoy a delicious treat. (Recommended for children 18 months+)

Fox, M., **Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge** (1984)

A very young boy helps a very old woman retrieve memories of her childhood. (Recommended for children 3 yrs.+)

MacDonald, A., **Little Beaver and the Echo** (1993)

With the help of some new friends, a lonely beaver follows the echo of his own voice and discovers that he is not alone. (Recommended for children 3 yrs.+)

Paratore, C., **26 Big Things Small Hands Do** (2008)

This is an alphabet book with a difference. It is creatively written to inspire character development in young children and empower them to contribute to bettering the world. (Recommended for children 1 yr.+)

Seskin, S. & Shamblin, A. , **A Chance to Shine** (2006)

A neighbourhood merchant gives "down and out" Joe an opportunity to help out and it turns Joe's life around. (Recommended for children 5 yrs.+)

Williams, V. B., **A Chair for My Mother** (1982)

Neighbours help a young girl and her mother when a fire destroys their home and possessions. Then mom, daughter and grandmother save enough money to buy a comfortable chair for their new apartment. Recommended for children 4 yrs.+)

Winter, J., **Wangari's Trees of Peace** (2008)

The true story of Wangari Maathai, an environmentalist and Nobel Peace Prize winner, who inspired the women of Kenya to work together to plant trees and turn their land green again. (Recommended for children 6 yrs.+)



Participation & Helping Out

When parents participate in community activities and help others, children learn how, too. Helping others and participating gives us a sense of purpose and helps us feel like we belong.

SHARE “helping out” by participating with your child...

- Do helpful and kind things for your family and others together...
 - “Let’s wave to Mr. Jake. It lets him know we are thinking about him.”
 - “We can help Sarah put the plates out for dinner.”
- Point out helpful behavior and participation
 - “I see you brought a toy for Amir to play with, too. That was kind. It helped him be part of the game.
 - “Aunt Karen plays the piano at the retirement home every week. The music helps the people there feel happy.”
 - “Thank you for helping. It feels good to do this job together.”



ASK your child about participating...

- “It was so good to help, wasn’t it?”
- “What can we do to help others today?”

PAUSE and THINK about ways to encourage helpfulness throughout the day....

- Passing out snacks
- Helping in your community
- Cleaning up, doing chores
- Saying helpful things
- Reading books about helpful characters
- Doing things with you

AND babies and toddlers, too!

- Show you are happy when your baby gives you a smile.
- Show you are happy and say “thank you” when your baby gives you an object.



More FREE online resources to build your child’s resilience

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



Encourage participation & helpfulness!