

Jordan Peipi and Fili Moalafotu

How to build resilience in kids

It's a given that we don't know what the future holds for our children. But one thing we can be sure of its likely to bring a combination of highs and lows. If we teach them the right skills now, they'll be able to confidently embrace whatever the future brings their way.

Of course resilience, self-confidence and respect for others, aren't just skills that will help children in the future, they're the tools they need to navigate the increasingly complicated world they live in today. Many kids struggle with fitting in, and keeping up in the classroom or at sport. If kids can learn what they have inside is greater than any of the obstacles they'll face, life will be all about possibilities.

That's the message Jordy Peipi and Fili Moalafotu take into primary schools in their jobs as leaders for Kiwi Can, one of several programmes run by the Graeme Dingle Foundation designed to encourage young Kiwis to be more confident, find purpose and achieve success.

Kiwi Can breaks big concepts such as resilience into smaller modules using games and activities to guide kids through understanding goal setting, problem solving and perseverance.

"We talk about what a goal is, practice setting goals, then they come up with some goals they can set in school, at home and in their sport or music," says Peipi.

Whether it's doing all their reading every night for a week, or making their bed, goal setting helps kids focus their time and energy, and helps them learn about breaking big ideas into small manageable steps. It's about feeling positive about what they have achieved, rather than overwhelmed by things they haven't.



When kids struggle, it's natural to want to make their problems go away, but more worthwhile give them the tools and confidence they need to become effective problem solvers. Firstly, they need to hear an adult telling them they've got what it takes, and teach them how to brainstorm solutions for whatever they're struggling with, whether it's fitting all the pieces of a puzzle together or scoring a goal. Their confidence will improve with each success they have.

But they won't always be successful, and perseverance is an important part of building resilience.

Say Fili, "It's teaching them to bounce back from challenges. I notice small things can sometimes upset them easily, like losing a game. We teach them to try, try and try again, and it's not about winning, but what you learn on the way."

Sir Graeme Dingle and his wife Jo-anne Wilkinson founded their foundation back in 1995, with a realisation that Kiwi kids needed help unlocking their potential. Peipi and Moalafotu have only been working with it for a fraction of that time, but love seeing the difference a few life skills can make.

"The kids have great ideas," says Peipi. "We always use those in the learning."

We want every child to know: What they have inside is greater than any obstacle.