

# Nurturing Resilience in Students Before School Starts



**Angela Smith**  
Guest Columnist

The COVID crisis has created unprecedented challenges for many families. Parents and students altered how and where learning occurred. Although changes to school, work, and other life experiences can be stressful for the whole family, it is especially challenging for children. Childhood development experts are elevating the issue of resilience and sharing suggestions with parents and caregivers to help kids become more resilient, which will help give them the skills they need to help them through tough times.

Mollie Marti, the founder of the National Resilience Institute says, "Even before the pandemic, the statistics about anxiety and depression among teens were cause for great concern. More than ever, it's important for parents and schools to actively foster the growth of children who can problem-solve and adapt when facing challenging situations."

The National Resilience Institute teamed up with Connections Academy on a special series to help parents and caregivers support their children thrive during difficult times.

A recent report by Connections Academy and Pearson called Parent Pulse, found many children are dealing with mental health concerns due to the pandemic. The report indicated 89% of parents said the disruption of school during the COVID crisis added to the overall feeling of stress among young people, and 56% noticed their own child was anxious or depressed. Unfortunately, mental health challenges for youth aren't new. A recent Oregon Healthy Teens Survey noted, in the past year more than 32% of 8th graders and 36% of 11th graders exhibited depressive symptoms.

Building resilience is more than a short-term fix. The National Resilience Institute defines resilience as, "the capacity to prepare for, adapt to, and grow through trauma, disruption or loss." Resilient children come away from stressful circumstances with positive feelings about themselves, a sense of control over their future, and a way to solve problems.

When outside events happen that are scary and overwhelming, which can lead to problems making learning difficult and their grades might suffer. Growing resilience has positive impacts on educational outcomes and other aspects of a child's life.

Parents need to practice resiliency for themselves to be effective for their children. Self-care, emotional regulation, and coping skills are important tools for parents when helping children develop resilience. Parents can't shield children from every stressful part of life. However, we can help them prepare and teach them skills to get through trying situations.

Here are suggestions for parents to build resilience for students and improve

their mental health:

## Relationships

Resilience is tied to relationships. Kids need to feel safe, accepted by others, and have control over their actions. Once those needs are met, children are more likely to actively seek out meaningful relationships and to ask adults for help.

## Regulating Emotions

Children have a harder time regulating their emotions, especially when they are scared. Have them practice breathing exercises when they feel stressed or angry. Stretching and meditation can also reduce anxiety.

## Self-care

Make time for self-care for your children. This means taking time in their day to relax or socialize. It is equally important to teach them the value of proper nutrition, exercise, and getting enough sleep. Explain that by taking care of themselves, they will be better equipped to handle challenging circumstances.

## Self-Awareness and Self-Advocacy

When parents and caregivers help children understand why they're scared or angry when they encounter adversity it helps build self-awareness. Once they comprehend those feelings it reduces conflict and kids can better communicate their needs. Self-advocacy is also an important concept for children. Encourage them to use "I" statements when they're in a toxic situation such as "I don't like that, please stop."

## Coping Skills

Parents can use small challenges in life to teach children coping skills that will make them more resilient to larger struggles. These mechanisms include problem-solving, journaling, and positive self-talk ("I can do this").

## Circle of Control

Helping students identify what is within their control and what is outside of their control can help them feel safe and better equipped to deal with the anxiety of the unknown. I worked recently with a student who had social anxiety and refused to speak to people outside her family. I coached her on taking small steps by virtually typing/texting between us. That led to her opening up and communicating verbally. I hope this information is helpful for families looking to boost resilience for their children as the new school year approaches.

For more information on how to build resilience in children, visit [connection-sacademy.com/support/resources/article/resilience-series-1](http://connection-sacademy.com/support/resources/article/resilience-series-1)

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# The Chicken Shack, a regional chain, is coming to Keizer

## Emily Teel

Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Hand-breaded wings, chicken fingers, fries and 30 sauce options; The Chicken Shack is on its way to the Salem-Keizer area.

Founded in Las Vegas in 2005, The Chicken Shack is a Nevada-based franchise with 15 locations across Colorado, California, Nevada and Washington. The first location in Oregon is located in Klamath Falls. Keizer will be the second.

Markey Toomes and Monica Toomes are opening the restaurant. The couple moved to Oregon from California in August 2019 and have been planning to open a restaurant for three years.

When a location of The Chicken Shack opened in their hometown, said Markey Toomes, "It quickly became our favorite restaurant. I have Southern roots and it reminded me of our grandmother's cooking."

Chicken Shack Keizer will be located at 3844 River Road North in that space that was, until March, El Patron Mexican Grill.

A casual restaurant concept, The Chicken Shack offers combination



**Founded in Las Vegas in 2005, The Chicken Shack offers combination meals of wings, chicken fingers, fries, salads and sides.** COURTESY OF THE CHICKEN SHACK

meals and a limited menu of shakes, fried chicken sandwiches and burgers in addition to signature wings, chicken fingers and loaded fries.

The Toomes are currently working on renovations to the space. They hope to be ready to open in late August.

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# Testing

Continued from Page 1A

zation to do these tests from the FDA. Emergency-use authorizations allow for more availability and use of "medical countermeasures" — currently unapproved methods or products — for use when there's an emergency or no alternative.

As of Wednesday morning, the FDA had approved 143 emergency authorizations since February 2020.

"In order to (be authorized), you have to have samples collected using the same procedures that you're going to use in real life, and you have to do it in a way that you have known positives and known negatives," said Cass Moseley, UO's interim vice president for research and innovation. "Then your system has some sort of proof that you get the right answer. So that's where we are right now is we're needing to collect those samples."

The first phase of the project was completed June 15. UO collected about 80 samples from UO students, with a voluntary response rate of 14%. Students gave an oral swab, nose swab and saliva swab. Leve said this showed that not many people are likely to volunteer, even when a test is available, so they will have to do more outreach for testing.

UO needs at least 30 positive results and 30 negative results to be validated. This has proved to be a challenge, Moseley said, because Lane County hasn't seen as many positive COVID-19 cases as other areas of the state. That's a good thing, but it makes it difficult to gather the necessary results to expand saliva



**Nurses seal up a saliva sample to forward to the lab for testing in Tuscaloosa, Ala.**  
GARY COSBY JR./TUSCALOOSA NEWS VIA USA TODAY NETWORK

testing.

To validate the saliva testing method, UO has partnered with Marion County as one area identified as a major hot spot for cases.

From Aug. 15 to Sept. 30, the program plans to ramp up with "drive-through, door-to-door, pick-up/drop-off, and/or mail collection methods," according to the presentation.

Community testing — and scaling the testing capacity up in preparation for fall — is coming, officials said.

"We're still early into this pandemic, and as tired as many of us are, we really have to continue to work together and look at community health in all of its guises and all of its opportunity and work together to achieve that," Dr. Patrick Luedtke, Lane County's senior pub-

lic health officer, said during the information session.

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