Help Your Child Learn From Disappointment

You can’t spare your child from disappointments at school or in life, nor should you want to. Learning to deal with rejection by a friend, not winning an election or making a team, and other setbacks helps kids cope later in life.

How you respond to your child’s disappointments will greatly influence how well he learns to cope. To help him learn to tolerate frustration (and even grow from it):

- **Praise your child often.** Having a strong sense of self-worth helps your child think, “I can do things if I try.”
- **Help your child anticipate** that things might not work out the way he wants. Show him how to explore options by playing “what if” games.
- **Don’t assume you know how your child feels**—ask him. His emotions might be quite different from those you would feel.
• **Take your child’s disappointment seriously.** Listen closely and acknowledge his feelings. Don’t try to talk him out of his feelings.

• **Ask questions about what happened** to help your child explore, understand and learn from the experience.

• **Don’t try to fix everything for your child.** Don’t blame the teacher or another child, or automatically pull your child out of an activity.

• **Let your child know you are proud** of him for trying.

• **Share your own disappointments** and how you overcame them.