

## Building Resiliency in Kids

At our December 2025 NF support group meeting we talked about how we could help kids maintain their self-confidence and feeling of self-worth. It was a great discussion, and we thought it would be worthwhile to share some of the helpful ideas that came out of it.

- Several parents had positive experiences with the scouting program — both boy scouts and girl scouts. These were small groups where kids got to know each other well through interesting activities, and developed supportive and lasting friendships.
- Several parents had participated in Project Cornerstone in their kids' schools. They learned skills that helped them engage with kids and create a classroom environment where the kids can grow up valued, respected, and known.
- A number of parents had good words about their kids' participation in karate or similar self-defense programs. The kids acquired skills in a supportive environment and gained a sense of inner strength.
- It was noted that team or competitive sports can help a kid grow from adversity. A loss or other setback is not the end of the world and doesn't make you a worse person. A kid can develop inner strength, internalizing the lesson early on that life has both ups and downs.
- One parent learned a lot about how to help her kids with self-esteem through the Good Inside program online — a parenting coaching service whose objective is to raise sturdy, confident, and resilient kids.
- Some of biggest challenges to a child's self-esteem were seen in peers' negative reaction to inappropriate behavior in the classroom. Parents were able to help their kids understand the impact of that behavior on others, but noted it is important to teach kids not to mask their feelings but to express them in an appropriate way.

As a follow-up to this discussion, parents should be aware that some help may be available through the websites of the two national NF organizations.

- The Children's Tumor Foundation provides an excellent NF Parent Guidebook that gives practical advice on resilience and behavior control, as well as many other helpful parenting tips. ([https://www.ctf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/CTF\\_NF\\_Parent\\_Guidebook.pdf](https://www.ctf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/CTF_NF_Parent_Guidebook.pdf))
- The Neurofibromatosis Network includes a webinar on bullying and how to deal with it. ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZV\\_zgD1sjk&t=2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZV_zgD1sjk&t=2s))