

Nectar's Resilience Routines: Emotional Regulation, Growth Mindset/Grit, and Social Thinking Activities

Complete these activities daily to build resiliency. Remember, small consistent practice is what makes a big difference.

Resilience Routines for Emotional Regulation

Feelings Check-In

Have the child identify:

- What am I feeling?
 - What color/zone is my brain/body in?
 - What triggered it?
 - What would help me regulate?
-

Body Signal Detective

Teach the child to notice:

- tight muscles
- fast heartbeat
- clenched fists
- stomach discomfort
- pacing
- shutting down

Goal:

Recognize dysregulation BEFORE escalation.

Calm Kit Toolbox

Create a physical "toolbox" with:

- headphones
- fidgets
- breathing cards
- calming scents
- coloring pages,
- weighted lap pad
- coping cards

Practice using tools BEFORE crises occur.

Frustration Ladder

Have the child rate frustration from 1–10 and identify:

- what a "3" feels like
- what a "7" feels like
- what tools help at each level

Build self-awareness and intervention early.

Redo Practice

When frustration causes a poor response:

- pause
- regulate
- practice the interaction again successfully

This builds recovery skills rather than shame.

Calm Breathing Games

Examples:

- balloon breathing
- feather blowing
- candle breathing
- square breathing
- bubble breathing

Keep it playful and brief.

Emotion Charades

Act out emotions and discuss:

- facial expressions
- body language
- tone of voice
- clues others can notice

Helps emotional awareness and social interpretation.

Regulation Reset Routine

Create a consistent reset sequence:

1. Pause
2. Breathe
3. Move
4. Hydrate
5. Re-enter calmly

Routine builds predictability and nervous system safety.

Resilience Routines for Growth Mindset / Grit / Frustration Tolerance / Work Ethic

“Yet” Practice

Add the word “yet”:

- “I can’t do this... yet.”
- “I don’t understand this... yet.”

Simple but powerful cognitive reframing.

Celebrate Mistakes

At dinner or bedtime:

- “What mistake helped you learn today?”

Normalize struggle as part of growth.

Productive Struggle Tasks

Give mildly challenging activities where success is NOT immediate:

- puzzles
- LEGO builds
- strategy games
- cooking
- model kits
- difficult crafts

Coach persistence without rescuing too quickly.

Effort Praise Instead of Outcome Praise

Instead of:

- “You’re so smart.”

Use:

- “You stayed with that.”
- “You kept trying.”
- “I noticed your persistence.”

Builds internal resilience.

Challenge of the Week

Choose one manageable challenge:

- trying a new food
- learning a new skill
- completing a difficult task
- initiating conversation

Celebrate courage and persistence.

Frustration Recovery Practice

Teach:

- pause
- breathe
- self-talk
- retry.

Goal:

Normalize recovery after difficulty.

Hard Thing First

Have the child complete one non-preferred task FIRST before preferred activities.
Builds task initiation and discipline gradually.

Family Growth Mindset Language

Use phrases like:

- “Your brain grows through challenge.”
- “Mistakes help the brain learn.”
- “Hard does not mean impossible.”

Repeated language shapes mindset.

Goal Tracking Chart

Track:

- effort
- persistence
- emotional recovery
- trying again
- task completion

Do NOT only reward perfection.

Resilience Routines for Social Thinking

Perspective Detective

Ask:

- “What might they be thinking?”
- “How do you think they felt?”
- “What clues tell us that?”

Use TV shows, books, or real-life situations.

Conversation Ping Pong

Practice back-and-forth conversation:

- ask question
- answer
- add comment
- ask another question

Helps reciprocal communication.

Facial Expression Matching

Use photos or magazines and identify:

- emotions
 - tone
 - likely thoughts
 - social context
-

Social Prediction Game

Pause during movies/books and ask:

- “What do you think happens next socially?”
- “How might that person react?”

Builds inference skills.

Hidden Rules Practice

Discuss “unwritten social rules”:

- personal space
- turn-taking
- interrupting
- voice volume
- waiting

Many children need these explicitly taught.

Flexible Thinking Challenges

Purposely change small routines:

- different route
- different seat
- altered plans

Practice coping with flexibility in safe doses.

Role Play Scenarios

Practice:

- joining conversations
- handling disagreement
- losing games
- greeting others
- asking for help

Repetition improves confidence.

Compliment Practice

Encourage noticing and verbalizing positive things about others.

Builds awareness of social reciprocity.

“What Would You Do?” Social Problem Solving

Discuss hypothetical situations:

- someone cuts in line
- friend changes plans
- misunderstanding occurs

Explore multiple possible responses.