

**Resilient Children:
Literature Review and Evidence
from the HOPE VI Panel Study**

Final Report

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INTRODUCTION

The HOPE VI program targets the nation's most distressed public housing—impoverished communities with substandard housing and extreme levels of drug trafficking and violent crime. Created by Congress in 1992, the HOPE VI program was designed to address not only the bricks-and-mortar problems in distressed public housing, but also the social and economic needs of the residents and the health of surrounding neighborhoods.¹ The program's major objectives are

- to improve the living environment for residents of severely distressed public housing by demolishing, rehabilitating, reconfiguring, or replacing obsolete projects in part or whole;
- to revitalize the sites of public housing projects and help improve the surrounding neighborhood;
- to provide housing in ways that avoid or decrease the concentration of very low-income families; and
- to build sustainable communities.

The HOPE VI Panel Study addresses the questions of whether the HOPE VI program has met its goal of providing residents with an improved living environment and how HOPE VI families have fared as relocation and revitalization have proceeded. The study tracks outcomes for original residents at five sites where redevelopment activities began in 2001. At baseline in summer 2001, we surveyed a sample of 887 heads of households across five sites and conducted in-depth interviews with 39 adult-child dyads. We conducted a follow-up survey of 736 households and interviews with 29 adult-child dyads in 2003, 24 months after baseline.² The Panel Study sites are Shore Park/Shore Terrace (Atlantic City, NJ); Ida B. Wells Homes/Wells Extension/Madden Park Homes (Chicago, IL); Few Gardens (Durham, NC); Easter Hill (Richmond, CA); and East Capitol Dwellings (Washington, D.C.).³

The HOPE VI program can profoundly affect the lives of children, who are the most vulnerable residents of distressed public housing and particularly likely to suffer from stress of relocation (Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2001). Children growing up in these distressed developments confront many obstacles, all of which place them at risk for serious consequences including developmental delays, behavior problems, and poor school outcomes (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, and Aber 1997; Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2000). These include the dangers of their physical environment, a social world dominated by the drug economy, bad schools, and, frequently, parents coping with problems of their own. Children in HOPE VI sites face the additional hurdle of involuntary relocation, which has the potential to disrupt academic



achievement and increase behavior problems, especially if they are forced to change schools mid-year (Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2001; Hartmann 2002).

At baseline in 2001, we documented many ways at which the HOPE VI Panel Study children appeared to be at risk. But we also found that some children were doing surprisingly well and seemed to be able to cope effectively with the challenges in their environment. These children may not develop the delays, academic problems, and behavior problems that affect so many of their peers. However, we had little information about the factors that made some children seem more resilient than others faced with the same stresses.

At follow-up in 2003, we added items to the survey that would allow us to explore resiliency among HOPE VI children, including children's school engagement, measures of school quality, and measures of parental involvement in education. The purpose of this exploration was to develop a better understanding of the factors that might serve to protect children from the hazards of their environment. It is important to note that the HOPE VI Panel Study is a policy research study, and our purpose was not to explore the psychology of resiliency in depth. Rather, our goal was to identify factors related to resilient outcomes that could help guide policymakers and practitioners in developing interventions to help protect more children from the negative consequences of living in distressed communities and the stresses of involuntary relocation.

In this report, we first review existing research from a range of social science disciplines to identify key factors that seem to be related to resiliency and understand the ways in which these factors act to protect children from negative outcomes. Then, using data from the HOPE VI Panel Study, we explore which of these factors are related to resiliency in our sample of children from HOPE VI developments. Finally, we discuss the potential implications of this research for policy. An annotated bibliography on resiliency is included in appendix A.

UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCY

Understanding the factors that help children succeed is a complex challenge, requiring researchers to consider a wide range of personal, familial, social, and environmental factors that could contribute to “a process of, or capacity for, or the outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging and threatening circumstances” (Garmezy and Masten 1991).

Potential contributors to resilient outcomes for children that have been the focus of research include three groups:

- *Individual psychological characteristics* that allow children to cope effectively with stress, including “belief in one’s own self-efficacy, the ability to deal with change, and a repertoire of social problem-solving skills” (Rutter 1985);



- *Social and economic factors* such as socioeconomic status; family dynamics; parenting quality; quality and relationships with teachers and other adults (Werner 1993); neighborhood effects; and exposure to violence or trauma; and
- *Access to quality educational and recreational opportunities*, such as schools, sports teams, churches, and Boys and Girls clubs (Smokowski 1998).

In addition to identifying potential factors related to resiliency, there are multiple models that attempt to predict the ways in which these diverse factors might lead to positive outcomes for children. These models fall into three major categories:

- *Compensatory models*, which seek to identify factors that neutralize the negative consequences of exposure to risk. For example, a child with high self-esteem may be able to overcome stress and achieve a high level of competence. In this type of model, compensatory factors do not interact with risk factors, but rather have a direct and independent influence on the outcome.
- *Challenge models* treat stressors as potential enhancers of successful adaptation. Challenging experiences, when dealt with successfully, improve the child's ability to cope with future challenges.
- *Protective factor models*, which test how protective factors moderate the effect of a risk on the predicted outcome, and modify the child's response to the risk factors. For example, one study revealed that assertiveness reduced the negative effect of parental conflict. The protective factor model is in part a combination of the compensatory and challenge models, and is the most widely studied of the three.

In the next sections, we review the findings from social science research on resiliency, including the findings on risk factors and resiliency, protective factors that seem to facilitate positive outcomes, and issues such as the relationship between gender and positive outcomes for children. The literature on resiliency encompasses a range of social science disciplines; our review necessarily incorporates only a small portion of what is a large highly complex field of research. Because of our policy focus, we have chosen to primarily emphasize aspects of the literature that address factors that are amenable to intervention. For interested readers, we have included more details on individual studies in the annotated bibliography in appendix A.

Risk Factors and Stressors

Werner and Smith (1993) distinguish *risk factors*, which are conditions that remain fairly consistent over time, from *stressors*, or short-term conditions that are subject to change. Major risk factors include poverty status, low maternal education level, mental disorders (either of a



parent or the child), and physical health problems. Stressors include a range of types of events, ranging from the relatively benign—birth of siblings, change in residence or school—to much more negative events like separation from parents, familial instability or discord, or the death of a close relative.

Although much of the research on resiliency assumes a constant level of risk within samples based on economic or social thresholds, many authors conclude that, in reality, individual experiences of risk varies considerably. As Catterall (1998) notes, models aimed at assessing the contributions of individual protective factors to resiliency that assume consistent levels of risk across individuals may omit or fail to control for variables that are in fact driving protective factor findings. For example, Furstenberg's (1993) research on adolescents growing up in poor communities suggests that, in fact, the strength of the relationship between a particular risk and child outcomes varies by the child's level of exposure to that risk. Werner and Smith's (1989, 131) research implies a more complex process: while some protective factors discriminate between resilient and nonresilient children regardless of risk or stress level, others become significant only under conditions of persistent stress or high risk. Further, much resiliency research suggests that exposure to multiple risk factors increases the likelihood of negative outcomes (Werner and Smith 1993; Garmezy 1993).

Researchers have devoted considerable attention to the question of whether boys and girls handle stress and risk differently. Some studies of resilience suggest that preadolescent and adolescent girls tend to be slightly better adjusted and less prone to problem behavior than boys of similar ages (Hair et al. 2001, Chung and Elias 1996). However, other studies demonstrate no significant differences between genders on these variables (Aaronson and Kurkela 1998). Some researchers concentrate on the ways that adolescence is particularly difficult for girls. Reimer (2002), for example, notes that girls tend to experience declining self-esteem, body image problems, eating disorders, and higher rates of depression during middle school years. While girls have higher rates of eating disorders and depression, boys are more likely to have impulsivity problems or to 'act out.' Further, boys and girls appear to respond differently to stress: according to Simmons and others (1987), stressors tend to have a multiplier effect on girls (the more stressors girls experience, the more potent each individual stressor becomes), but not on boys.

Protective Factors

Resiliency researchers vary widely in how they define protective factors and the methods they use to measure those factors. Many researchers argue (Hannon 2003; Howard 1999; Nettles and Pleck 1993) that risk and protective factors differ across social and cultural contexts. Generally, researchers define *internal protective factors* as characteristics or personality traits of



the child, such as activity level, disposition, responsiveness to people, social orientation, communication skills, ability to focus, self-concept, internal locus of control, and desire to improve self (Werner and Smith 1993). *External protective factors* are sources of support and structure in the child's environment (parental warmth, presence of nonparental caretakers, informal sources of emotional support, peer relationships, rules in the household, shared values, access to services).

How much protective factors account for variation in resiliency among high-risk children seems to vary by the types of protective factors under consideration. Furstenberg and others (1999) find that children can succeed at relatively high levels if their families are very effective, even when they are living at high risk. Similarly, Werner and Smith (1989, 132) conclude "as disadvantage and the cumulative number of stressful life events increased, more protective factors in the children and their caregiving environment were needed to...ensure a positive developmental outcome." In contrast, other research indicates that protective factors play relatively little role in resiliency; D'Imperio and others (2000) find that protective resources did not distinguish between resilient and nonresilient, highly stressed children. Instead they hypothesize that long-term exposure to stressors may alter the availability and efficacy of protective factors.

Determining how to assess the strength or effectiveness of protective factors presents a particular challenge for researchers. Measuring protective factors through quantitative methods, such as counting the number of times a social interaction takes place, may mask variation in individual experiences of that interaction (Rak and Patterson 1966). Participation in after-school activities will only be effective in improving child outcomes if the quality of the activity and the environment in which it occurs is high and supervision is effective. Additionally, some protective factors may improve outcomes in one aspect of a child's life but worsen outcomes in another. At high levels of stress, while contributing to positive classroom behavior, intelligence "may function as a vulnerability factor for other domains of competence such as assertiveness or achievement" (Luthar 1991, 612).

Researchers disagree over whether some risk and protective factors are really distinct or, rather, part of a continuum where the absence of a protective factor constitutes a risk factor or vice versa. For example, a lack of parental warmth may be considered a risk factor, while the existence of parental warmth may be considered a protective factor. Short-term exposure to some types of risk may actually contribute to the development of protective factors and by extension, future resiliency. A moderate amount of stress appears to aid in the development of coping skills in children, improving outcomes in the longer term. Similarly, overcoming challenges helps build a child's self-confidence and locus of control, both of which enable them to cope with future challenges (Gore and Eckenrode 1996).



Despite variation in methodology and the challenges of effective measurement, our review of the research indicates two categories of protective factors that seem to be consistently associated with resiliency. First, children's own psychological characteristics seem to be protective. Resilient children tend to have strong social skills, and have personal characteristics that protect them against stress, such as an internal locus of control, strong ego development, perseverance, optimism, and self-efficacy (Luthar 1991; Floyd 1996; Chung and Elias 1996). However, at very high levels of risk, the impact of protective factors may be diminished (D'Imperio et al. 2000). Second, researchers find that family relationships are important contributors to both risk and resilience. Parental involvement, warm family environments, and interaction with non-family adults tend to predict adjustment and achievement, as well as the development of quality social relationships and strong social skills (Connell et al. 1994; Floyd 1996; Hair et al. 2001). Parenting styles also play a role in shaping competence in adolescents. For example, Lamborn and others (1991) find that authoritative parenting styles are associated with the highest levels of competence and the lowest levels of problem behavior, while authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting styles were all associated with somewhat higher rates of problem behavior. In comparing the impact of effective parenting for children facing differing levels of risk, Furstenburg (1999) notes that children may not be able to benefit from relatively low levels of risk unless they have skilled parents.

RESILIENT CHILDREN IN THE HOPE VI PANEL STUDY

The HOPE VI Panel Study presents a unique opportunity to study the factors that help some children cope more effectively than their peers with extreme stress. All of the children in the sample faced similar environmental stresses at baseline—substandard housing in high-poverty urban communities with high levels of crime and drug trafficking. All were from extremely low income, minority families, primarily single-parent households. As noted earlier, at baseline, we found indications that some children appeared to be thriving despite the many risks they faced, while others were already having serious problems with behavior and academic achievement. To explore this phenomenon, at follow-up we added items to the survey on children's school engagement, measures of school quality, and measures of parental involvement in education. The purpose of this exploration was to develop a better understanding of the factors that might serve to protect children from the hazards of their environment.

In general, findings from the follow-up in 2003 indicate a mixed picture overall for HOPE VI Panel Study children two years after revitalization began (Popkin, Eiseman, and Cove 2004). Children whose families had relocated—especially those who had moved with vouchers—were attending schools that were less poor and that parents perceived as higher quality. A substantial proportion (about half) of relocatees had changed schools. Although these moves were to apparently better schools, many children did have to move mid-year and parents reported that



they had difficulty adjusting. Further, the type of housing assistance the family chose seemed to affect how children fared after relocation: parents who moved to other public housing reported that their children’s behavior problems increased at follow-up, while those who relocated with vouchers reported improvements in their children’s behavior.

For our analysis of resiliency, we used data from the follow up to identify resilient children in the HOPE VI Panel Study sample, and then used multivariate analysis to explore the factors that appeared to be related to positive outcomes. Below, we first describe our research methodology, then discuss the findings from our exploratory analysis.

Methodology

The second wave of the HOPE VI Panel Study surveyed 736 heads of household either living in or recently relocated from distressed public housing. The survey including questions about housing, neighborhood, income, and health, as well as detailed information on behavior, health, and education for up to two randomly selected “focal children” in each family. The analysis on resiliency draws on data from interviews with heads of household about 374 focal children between the ages of 6 and 17 in 2003.

Definition of a Resilient Child

We defined a resilient child as one who did not have behavior problems, was not involved in delinquent activity, and was engaged in school. We categorized children as either resilient or not resilient, based on the following criteria: A resilient child must be, according to the report of his or her parent or guardian, highly engaged in school,⁴ not have more than one behavior problem,⁵ not participate in a delinquent or risky behavior,⁶ never have been held back in school, and never have been suspended, excluded, or expelled from school. Children who did not meet all of these criteria were categorized as not resilient (see table 1).

Table 1

Definition of a Resilient Child	Yes	No
The child is highly engaged in school.	x	
The child has two or more behavior problems.		x
The child has participated delinquent or risky behavior		x
Child has ever been suspended or expelled from school		x
Child has ever been retained in school.		x

We used a series of logistic regression models to test whether variables in our survey data concerning child and family characteristics were associated with resiliency. This analysis



does not distinguish between risk factors and protective factors. As in much of the research on resiliency, we have chosen to treat risk factors and protective factors as part of a continuum, with a risk factor considered simply as the absence of a protective factor, and vice versa. The dependent variable in these models is the dichotomous ‘resiliency’ variable as defined above. Our basic model used four control variables (see table 2).

Table 2

Control Variables
The gender of the child
The study site ⁷
Whether the child’s family had already relocated as part of the HOPE VI program
Whether the child was older than age 12

We then created a series of models to test whether various characteristics of children and their families were significantly associated with the child being defined as resilient. Each model included the above four control variables, and one of the substantive variables shown in table 3 that we hypothesized to be related to resiliency based on our review of the literature.

Table 3

Household Socioeconomic Characteristics
Head of household has a high school diploma.
Head of household has a GED but not a high school diploma
Annual household income of the family is under \$10,000
Head of household suffers from depression
Head of household is African-American ⁸
Head of household is married or has a domestic partner
Head of household was a teen parent
Parent Engagement
Head of household participates in the child’s school activities ⁹
Child regularly does things with an adult family member
Child Characteristics
Child is “well liked” by his or her peers
Child participates in after-school activities ¹⁰
Child regularly reads for pleasure
Child regularly attends religious services



Qualitative Analysis

At follow-up, we also conducted in-depth interviews with 29 heads of households and 27 children. Of these, 12 children were identified as resilient in our analysis of the survey data. We analyzed the transcripts of interviews with resilient children and their parent or guardian, and identified common themes in the lives of these children. We also compared them to interviews with children identified as not resilient.

Resilient Children

Based on the above criteria, 21 percent of the HOPE VI sample is resilient.¹¹ Of the negative behaviors that contribute to our definition, behavior problems affected the largest percentage of children in the overall HOPE VI Panel Study sample (50 percent), followed by suspension or expulsion (31 percent), grade retention (25 percent), and delinquency (7 percent). Over half of the HOPE VI children (59 percent) were not counted as resilient because their parent or caregiver did not report that the child was highly engaged in school.¹² More girls in our sample are resilient than boys, with 17 percent of boys and 25 percent of girls counted as resilient by our standard.¹³

Parental Characteristics Affect Resiliency

In general, children of better-educated parents are more likely to be successful in school (U.S. Department of Education 1999). Our analysis indicates that this holds true even in the HOPE VI Panel Study sample, a population where levels of education are relatively low. Just under half (45 percent) of the adult heads of household in our sample have a high school diploma. Children of parents who have high school diplomas are 70 percent more likely to be resilient, even when controlling for factors such as gender, age, site, and whether the child's family relocated as part of HOPE VI.¹⁴ However, children in families where the head of household had not finished high school, but did have a GED (17 percent of the sample), were not more likely to be resilient than children in a family where the head of household had not finished high school.

Having a parent who is actively engaged in a child's education is an important factor that can help children cope with the obstacles in their environment (Nord and West 2001). Helping a child with homework, paying close attention to grades, and attending school and after-school events can demonstrate the importance of education, and perhaps improve a child's commitment to school. Our findings show that HOPE VI Panel Study children in families where the head of household was actively engaged in the child's education were also twice as likely to be resilient as other children.¹⁵ However, even many of those who were high school graduates were not engaged in their children's education: 54 percent of high school graduates were



engaged in their child's education, as compared to 39 percent of those who did not complete high school.

Interview respondents described many ways in which parents were involved in their children's education. Both children and parents described parents enforcing rules about homework. For example, a child from Richmond said that her mother was "always trying to tell us to do our homework," while a mother from Washington, D.C., said she was "strict on 'em when it comes to school." Most parents of resilient children talked about visits with teachers, attendance at PTA meetings, and making extra visits as necessary when their child's performance fell. In some cases, nonparental adults such as mentors or older siblings also served as educational supports for resilient children, both formally and informally. One child whose parents spoke limited English drew on school-provided mentors for both homework help and career counseling. Other children had older siblings who had succeeded in school and encouraged them to succeed as well (see profile 1).

Maternal depression is often associated with negative outcomes for children (Werner and Smith 1989). Our analysis of resiliency shows that depression in the head of household reduces by about half the odds that a child in our sample will be classified as resilient.¹⁶ This relationship is due to the positive and strongly significant relationship between depression in the head of household and two or more behavior problems in the child (Popkin, Eiseman, and Cove 2004).

Profile 1: A Mother Focused on Education

Brenda's family was relocated in 2003 from Washington's East Capitol to another nearby public housing development. Brenda says her new development is dangerous for her children, with a rampant drug trade, many substance abusers, and even gunfire. The family had to cope with a bullet being shot through her son's bedroom window the first week they moved into their new apartment. Despite these dangers, Brenda keeps herself and her children focused on moving ahead. She works part-time as a teacher's aide and is going to school to get her teaching certification. Although Brenda had to move her family mid-year, she kept her son Kevin in his old school to avoid disrupting his education. Noting Kevin's strong interest in math and science, she enrolled him in a charter high school with a pre-engineering program that may allow him to graduate with up to 15 college credits. Kevin says that the kids in his new community are less disruptive and more successful in school than those he knew in East Capitol. He does not feel stressed, is in good health, gets along with his teachers, and plays on his school's football team. His dream is to go to the University of Maryland to play football and eventually make it to the NFL.



Socially Competent Children Are More Resilient

Other research on resiliency has identified individual characteristics of children that help them cope with stress, including social competence. Our findings provide some indication socially competent children in the HOPE VI Panel Study sample are more likely to be resilient. Specifically, children whose parents report that they are “admired and well like by other children” are about five times as likely to be resilient than other children.¹⁷

In our in-depth interviews, resilient children generally demonstrated high levels of confidence regarding their relationships with family, teachers, and peers and their ability to succeed in school (see profile 2). Resilient children usually described positive relationships with their teachers, often with statements like “teachers like me.” Most described school as fun or easy and provided several examples of their favorite class subjects. Many said they drew on parents, siblings, peers, and teachers for help with homework, or stated that they did not need help. Another indicator that resilient children were faring better academically was that the survey indicated that resilient children were significantly more likely to read for pleasure regularly than other children.¹⁸

Pro-social behaviors (voluntary behaviors intended to benefit another person) are also associated with positive social and emotional outcomes for children (Hair et al. 2001). In our in-depth interviews, children we identified as resilient described positive experiences with caregiving activities such as sibling care, mentoring of younger children, camp counseling, and even providing language support for parents. Interestingly, children who engaged in caregiving activities often described aspirations for future careers that also involved caregiving, such as teaching, nursing, or child psychology.

Resilient children’s relatively strong sense of self-efficacy also was evident in the matter-of-fact way they spoke about their neighborhoods. Although they seemed very aware of the dangers in their neighborhoods, resilient children described methods of managing those dangers by taking precautions, such as going indoors at night and avoiding certain areas. By comparison, some nonresilient children appeared overwhelmed by neighborhood threats, choosing instead to remain indoors and away from their neighbors. Resilient children also emphasized the positive aspects of their environments, including having friends and family nearby, neighbors who watched out for one another, block parties and a sense of community. Quoting her male friends in the neighborhood, one resilient girl from Chicago noted “I live in the ghetto...but I’m not going to act like the ghetto.” In sum, resilient children appeared to feel capable of handling stressors in their environments while remaining optimistic about the value of their communities.



Profile 2: Succeeding in School

Robert and his family used to live in Washington's East Capitol, but relocated to an apartment in a better neighborhood with a voucher. The most striking thing about Robert is his optimism. He is comfortable in his new neighborhood and talks about the ways people in his new neighborhood help each other out. While he made friends easily in his new neighborhood, he still maintains regular contact with his old friends. He says "basically I like all of my classes" and describes himself as a quick learner. He is involved in Junior ROTC and the drill team at school. His sister Carmen, who is in college and also participated in ROTC, visits regularly and helps him with his homework. His mother, Monique, works full time, and is confident about her son's future, saying that he is "going to follow into his sister's footsteps." Robert agrees; when asked what he thinks he'll be doing in five years, he says he plans to be studying accounting in college.

Relocation Did Not Affect Resilience

Children whose families relocated between baseline and follow-up were not significantly more or less likely to be resilient than children whose families remained in their original HOPE VI development. In addition, the type of housing assistance a child's family was receiving after relocation was not significantly correlated with resiliency. However, several of the factors contributing to our resiliency index (such as whether the child has ever been held back in school, or suspended or expelled from school, and whether the child has engaged in risky behavior) accumulate over time. The two-year interval between baseline and follow-up may not have been long enough for our survey to adequately measure the impact of relocation on a child's well being. We will continue to track this issue at the next follow-up in 2005.

Participating in After-School Programs May Help Children Be More Resilient

Participation in after-school activities may decrease the potency of environmental risk factors such as violence, drug activity, and gangs by reducing children's exposure to these negative influences. Further, some organized activities may improve children's social skills and self-efficacy (Hair 2001), ultimately contributing to positive social adjustment in adulthood (Werner and Smith 1989). External supports such as after-school activities become increasingly important as children age (Werner and Smith 2001). Children in the HOPE VI Panel Study sample whose parents report that they participate in after-school activities almost every day are about 70 percent more likely to be resilient than other children.¹⁹



Our in-depth interviews with resilient children suggest that participating in after-school programs may well contribute to children's social competence and interpersonal skills. For example, resilient children who participated in after-school activities expressed a preference for working in teams. One child who had participated in a local youth center from a very young age reported how he and his friends were "like a team together," while another child who had worked as a camp counselor expressed interest in a future career involving "teamwork."

However, our in-depth interviews with parents suggest that their concerns about safety can limit their children's ability to participate in potentially beneficial activities. Some parents spoke of keeping their children indoors and out of the homes of other children to protect them from drug dealers and shootings. While this is a rational approach to danger, it raises the concern that parents are trading the social competence of their children for safety. A few parents also noted that not all after-school activities are conducted in a controlled, safe environment. For example, one mother said she prevented her daughter from attending a local recreation center because her daughter often got beaten up there. This mother's experience suggests that the quality of the after-school activity is crucial to the activity's effectiveness in improving outcomes for children.

IMPLICATIONS

Children in the HOPE VI Panel Study sample face enormous challenges in becoming successful adults. Their families have extremely low incomes, they attend poor schools, and they live in communities where they have to cope daily with the hazards of drug trafficking and violent crime. Although our findings indicate that many of them are struggling in school and experiencing behavior problems (Popkin, Eiseman and Cove 2004), our analysis also indicates that at a substantial proportion—one in five—appear to be more resilient than others. The factors associated with resiliency in our sample are not surprising: parents who have finished high school, are more engaged with their children's education, and are not depressed; children with higher levels of self-efficacy and social competence. These findings certainly suggest the need for additional exploration in future phases of the study to see how these relationships change as children age. However, they also suggest policy interventions that may help to support children as they cope with the stresses of distressed neighborhoods. Specifically, interventions that encourage parent participation in school and help reduce parental stress and depression may lead to better outcomes for children. As we have suggested in our earlier research, the period when a family is relocating from public housing presents an opportunity to offer interventions, such as long-term counseling, that can help families cope with the challenges of poverty as well as the disruption of relocation.



In addition, our findings suggest a need for high-quality after-school activities that help to protect children from the hazards of their environment. High-quality programs provide children important opportunities to develop confidence and social skills. However, it is critical that parents and children feel these programs are provided in a safe and secure environment and that children will be safe traveling to and from activities. Counseling accompanying relocation services should specifically focus on children's needs, linking families to high-quality programs in their new communities.



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APPENDIX A: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aronen, Eeva T., and Sirpa A. Kurkela. 1998. "The Predictors of Competence in an Adolescent Sample: A 15-Year Follow-up Study." *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry* 52:203.

This study examines the influence of early risk factors, early intervention, and current family factors on the social and academic competence of a sample of 14- and 15-year-olds. The author interviewed 170 families following the birth of a child in 1976, and followed up with 138 adolescents 15 years later. In the first six months after birth, psychiatric nurses visited each family between three and six times. The nurses gathered information through interviews and observations about child and the family. At six months, the children were divided into low- and high-risk groups, based on a risk index composed of information on family relationships, family health, and family socioeconomic status. Half of each group was then assigned to receive counseling from a psychiatric nurse every four to six weeks for five years. The counseling aimed to improve the child's psychological well-being by influencing the parent's childrearing practices. Counseling methods were based on the psychodynamic theory of development. Fifteen years later, both the children and the parents were given questionnaires designed to gather background information and explore the family structure, present illnesses, and the child's social competence. The author analyzed the data using multiple regression analyses, and analysis of variance.

The authors found that early risk factors were the strongest contributors to social competence, and that none of the tested variables predicted academic competence. There were no statistically significant differences between the counseling groups and the control groups. The present social class of the father had a significant effect, with higher social class families reporting higher competence. Neither income, family size, gender, nor present illnesses were significant. The authors conclude that positive family interactions during early development are important for adolescent social competence.

Behrmester, Duane. 1990. "Intimacy of Friendship, Interpersonal Competence, and Adjustment during Preadolescence and Adolescence." *Child Development* 61.

This study evaluates the hypothesis that the intimacy of friendship and competency in close relationships are more important during adolescence than during preadolescence. The author gathered data from surveys given to 102 10- to 13-year-olds and 70 13- to 16-year-olds. Youths in each age group evaluated reciprocated friendships with two other youths also in the sample.



The literature on friendship predicts that the importance and the intimacy of friendships increase with the transition from preadolescence to adolescence. To test this hypothesis, the author sampled 133 fifth and sixth graders and 100 eighth and ninth graders from Los Angeles schools. Subjects were matched with other subjects with whom they had reciprocal friendships, and the subjects rated themselves and their friends for adjustment and social competence, and their friendships on measures of intimacy.

The authors found that friendship intimacy was correlated with adjustment and social competence among adolescents, but that these variables were somewhat less consistently correlated among preadolescents. The most important age differences occurred in self-reported intimacy—for friend-reported intimacy, differences were in the expected direction but not significant. Support for the hypothesis was therefore mixed. Adolescents in companionate, disclosing friendships reported being more competent and social, and less hostile, anxious, and depressed than others in less intimate friendships.

Boyden, Jo. 2003. “Children under Fire: Challenging Assumptions about Children’s Resilience.” *Children, Youth and Environments* 13(1).

This article addresses the traditionally held views within the medical and social sciences of childhood and child development and theories of human responses to adversity in the context of their influence on policy interventions. After a thorough review of the literature in this realm, the author calls for a paradigmatic shift in thinking about children as agents of their own development who, even during times of great adversity, consciously act upon and influence the environments in which they live. That is, rather than building interventions on a universal construction of childhood as a period of dependence and vulnerability, the author urges the development of policy that is sensitive to the widely contrasting conditions and circumstances and different capacity and needs of children. Thus, developing a better understanding of (1) the culture in which children live shapes the way they are perceived and treated; (2) the way they experience childhood; and (3) the actual competencies children develop in the face of adversity is an important departure that must take place from traditional policy. The author concludes with the recommendation that if children are to be helped to overcome highly stressful experiences, then their views and perspectives need to be treated as a source of learning and strength, not weakness. The practical value of an understanding of children as resourceful is that it builds on children’s strengths, rather than emphasizing their dependence on adult expertise.

Chung, Hyun Hee, and Maurice Elias. 1996. “Patterns of Adolescent Involvement in Problem Behaviors: Relationship to Self-Efficacy, Social Competence, and Life Events.” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 24(6).

This article examines the relationships between problematic behavior in adolescents, such as alcohol, drug, and tobacco use, and social competence, self-efficacy, and life events.



The research examined 556 adolescents, grades 9 to 12, in a working-class multiethnic (but predominantly white) suburban area. The authors distributed surveys to the students in school classrooms, which included the National Youth Survey of antisocial and delinquent behavior. The authors derived from the survey indices of problem behavior, such as drug use. The analysis was able to divide the subjects into four clusters with particular patterns of competence, self-efficacy, and life events. The authors hypothesized that problem behaviors co-occur, and that patterns of problem behaviors are differentially associated with personal and environmental risk factors.

Analysis showed that there were significant associations between problematic behaviors and self-efficacy, and that taking part in after-school activities associated with life events. Boys generally showed higher levels of problem behavior than girls, with differences in delinquent behavior occurring in grades 9 and 10, and difference in levels of both delinquent behavior and drug use in grades 11 and 12. Clusters were similar in measures of self-worth. The low-risk cluster had lower scores on problem behaviors, higher scores on academic measures, and lower scores in social and physical measures. The second, low-risk with experimentation group had higher levels of alcohol use but higher measures of competence in other areas. The moderate-risk cluster had higher rates of smoking and alcohol, but generally positive self-efficacy. The highest-risk group had multiple problem behaviors, but measures of self-efficacy did not differ significantly from other groups.

Generally, a large number of the adolescents were engaged in some problem behaviors, particularly smoking or alcohol, suggesting that these behaviors are normative at some ages. Reported social resources did not vary significantly between the clusters, but self-efficacy in peer relationships did vary somewhat. The author cautions that these results were observed in a mostly white, working-class setting, and results may not be applicable to other cultural contexts.

Connell, James Patrick, Margaret Beale Spencer, and J. Lawrence Aber. 1994.
“Educational Risk and Resilience in African-American Youth: Context, Self, Action, and Outcomes in School.” *Child Development* 65.

This article assesses how indicators of context, self, and action interact with risk and resilience in 10- to 16-year-old African Americans. The study proposes a model of human motivation and tests its empirical validity. Samples were drawn from predominantly poor populations in upstate New York, Atlanta, and a combined sample of New York City, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C.

The youths' reports of their parents' involvement in their schooling predicted a composite self-system process, which predicted adjustment and academic achievement. Disaffected students experienced less family involvement than engaged students. The results further showed that, experience of family support, sense of control, and feelings of security and self-



worth were better predictors of adaptive behavior than family socioeconomic conditions, neighborhood socioeconomic conditions, or gender.

In all three samples, girls had lower levels of negative education outcomes than boys, and in two of the three girls had higher positive outcomes. Also in two of the three data sets, more risk behavior was indicated for boys than for girls. In the Atlanta sample, girls reported higher levels of “self system processes,” and showed more positive outcomes.

D’Imperio, Rhonda L., E. F. Dubow, and M. F. Ippolito. 2000. “Resilient and Stress-Affected Adolescents in an Urban Setting.” *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology* 29(1).

This study documents 185 seventh- and eighth-grade inner-city adolescents and predicts that resilient (high stress/high competence) and stress-affected (high stress/low competence) youth would differ across three domains of hypothesized protective resources: internal resources, familial support, and extrafamilial support. Therefore, this approach to studying resilience questions whether as the levels of stressors increase, the level of attained competence is dependent on the level of a hypothesized protective resource. Data were collected through a variety of different measures: demographic variables, stressful life events and experiences scales, and a series of indices evaluating competence, potential protective resources, and internalizing problems. Many participants reported experiencing a substantial number of stressful life events, as well as the chronic stressors of neighborhood disadvantage; however, adolescents found to be resilient did not report higher levels of protective resources compared to their stress-affected peers. The study suggests possible explanations for this null finding and recommends directives for future research. Based on the results, future studies should explore the following: (1) how disadvantaged youth cope with stressors of varying characteristics; (2) how at extreme levels of stress even the most salient protective factors may lose their impact; (3) how, over time, protective resources have the potential to lose their ability to enhance adjustment or may be more beneficial at different phases of development; and (4) how potential protective resources by themselves may be compromised by chronically disadvantaged environments. The authors note that this study is an important addition to the resilience literature in that it calls attention to the possibility that, under conditions of cumulative stressor exposure, certain protective resources may have a diminished impact or be eroded; and suggests that the most successful intervention programs will focus not only on enhancing protective resources directly but also on alleviating sources of stress in the community and family.

Floyd, Caren. 1996. “Achieving Despite the Odds: A Study of Resilience among a Group of African-American High School Seniors.” *The Journal of Negro Education* 65(2).

This article details a study that explored resilience in 20 high-achieving African American high school seniors. The sample included 10 boys and 10 girls. All of the students had taken at



least one college preparatory class, all had been admitted to college, and all came from families incomes low enough to qualify them for free or reduced-price lunch. The author gathered data through four personal interviews with each student, and one group interview with all of the students. The data suggested that the student's shared three protective mechanisms: a supportive and nurturing family and home, interaction with committed and concerned educators and other adults, and personalities that included perseverance and optimism. These factors helped the students to focus on their educations despite serious problems in their lives and economic insecurity. The author concludes that efforts to assist poor African-American students achieve success in school should focus on developing those qualities.

Furstenberg, Frank F., T. D. Cook, J. Eccles, G. H. Elder, and A. Sameroff. 1999.
“Adolescent Competence and the Effects of Cumulative Risk Factors.” In *Managing to Make It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

In this chapter, the authors examine the extent to which family management practices mitigate the cumulative risks created by unfavorable neighborhood conditions, demographic disadvantages, or parents' psychological liabilities. By making use of a multivariate analysis presented in previous chapters, the analysis offers a different way of testing whether family management practices actually do mitigate environmental risks by examining a set of protective factors. The overall objective of this chapter is to determine whether and how much family patterns—parental socialization techniques and strategies for managing the external world—offset the cumulative risks associated with unfavorable conditions. Analysis is centered around two measures which include and are defined as follows: (1) Risk: generated level of overall risk by combining measures of risk from three contexts—demographic, neighborhood, and caregivers' resources—and generating a composite measure based on the number of high-risk contexts children faced; (2) Protective factors: constructed by classifying the in-home measures of family management (parental warmth, support for autonomy, etc.) and the external measures (institutional connections, parental investment, public versus private schooling, etc.) into two separate indices. Implications of the findings are that youth require both effective parents and benign environments to do well. They can succeed at relatively high levels if their families are very effective, even when they are living at high risk. If families are not very effective, then youth are only somewhat likely to succeed—even in relatively benign circumstances. However, environmental risk largely contributes to the odds of success. By the study's measurements, youth are twice as likely to be successful if they face only a moderate level of risk and three times as likely to be successful if they face a low level of risk, even when they receive the most effective parenting. In sum, the analysis shows us that children are not able to reap the benefits of a better environment when their parents are incapable of capitalizing on those advantages. Yet, even with the most skilled parents, children are affected by disadvantaged environments.



Furstenberg, Frank F., Jr., and Mary Elizabeth Hughes. 1997. "The Influence of Neighborhoods on Children's Development: A Theoretical Perspective and Research Agenda." In *Neighborhood Poverty. Vol. 1: Context and Consequences for Children*, edited by Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, Greg J. Duncan, and J. Lawrence Aber. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

While traditional approaches to assessing neighborhood impacts on children assume uniformity across families within given parameters, traditional social psychology approaches allow for variation in family and child responses to environmental risks. Effective models of neighborhood effects must also vary by gender and age. Comprehensive studies of neighborhood impacts on child outcomes should extend beyond neighborhood characteristics to also include contributions of children's family systems and neighborhood-related aspects of child development. More specifically, neighborhood characteristics including infrastructure (quality of housing, spatial arrangements, street conditions, vandalism), demographics, institutions (police, welfare agencies, health clinics, churches, businesses, community centers), and social organization (shared norms, reciprocal obligations, informational channels) contribute to child outcomes. The contributions of the family system, such as residential mobility, parental influence on children's responses to neighborhoods, and family-based social capital, should also be assessed. Finally, studies of neighborhood impacts on child outcomes should account for two aspects of child development including children's acquisition of social capital and their knowledge of the social world.

Garmezy, Norman. 1993. "Children in Poverty: Resilience Despite Risk." *Psychiatry* 56.

This article is divided into six sections including cumulative risk, resilience as a construct, foster care and later adaptation, child abuse and later adaptation, and the science and politics of resilience. In the first section, cumulative risk, Garmezy provides evidence from three studies that the likelihood of negative outcomes such as psychiatric disorder increases with exposure to additional types of risk. The likelihood of negative outcomes also increase, Garmezy notes, with prolonged exposure to risk over time, that is, prolonged exposure to risk may result in increasing manifest disorder as a child ages. In the second section, resilience as a construct, Garmezy distinguishes resilience, characterized by the ability to recover from a stressful period, from invulnerability, which implies the inability to be harmed at all. Children who appear resilient in one area of functioning, such as school performance, may not appear resilient in another area, such as freedom from anxiety. The following two sections of this paper highlight two studies showing that some children that lack consistent parental relationships or even those abused by their parents demonstrate significant resilience in adulthood. Garmezy outlines three main categories of protective factors that may explain this pattern in his fifth section, including temperament, family, and external supports. The final section advocates for



financial and political support to strengthen external protective factors such as schools for children living in poverty.

Gore, Susan, and John Eckenrode. 1996. "Context and Process in Research on Risk and Resilience." In *Stress, Risk, and Resilience in Children and Adolescents: Processes, Mechanisms, and Interventions*, edited by Robert J., Haggerty, Lonnie R. Sherrod, Norman Garmezy, and Michael Rutter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This article considers the features of and processes that link stressors, stress-mediating and -moderating mechanisms, and adaptive outcomes. The authors describe current analytic strategies used to address the interrelated nature of risk, protective factors, and outcomes. One approach assesses risk through indicators such as socioeconomic or mental health status, while another focuses on the role of life events in linking risk factors to negative outcomes. The authors favor contextual and mediational approaches that help explain the processes through which protective factors moderate the effects of risk factors on outcomes. They advocate the development of models in the future that account for the effects of risk on the formation of protective factors in individuals.

Hannon, Lance. 2003. "Poverty, Delinquency, and Educational Attainment: Cumulative Disadvantage or Disadvantage Saturation?" Joint Center for Poverty Research Working Paper Series: Working Paper 331.

This study examines whether socioeconomic status protects youth from the negative impact of delinquency on their educational future by empirically testing the opposing propositions among the cumulative disadvantage and disadvantage saturation perspectives. The cumulative disadvantage perspective argues that poor youth suffer greater consequences for their involvement in delinquency than middle- and upper-class youth in terms of their educational attainment. Contrary to this perspective, the disadvantage saturation thesis predicts that delinquency is less consequential for the educational attainment of poor youth than it is for nonpoor youth. Data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) were analyzed to test two competing hypotheses regarding how poverty affects the relationship between delinquency and educational attainment. Overall, the results from OLS and logistic regression analyses offer moderate support for the disadvantage saturation thesis and are inconsistent with the cumulative disadvantage perspective. That is, the structural condition of poverty seems to make behavioral conformity matter less for educational attainment. From a policy perspective, the author points out that the results are pertinent for program that target "at risk" juveniles in order to prevent high school dropout. Policy initiatives aimed at helping economically disadvantaged youth succeed in school should target a multitude of risk factors other than delinquency.



Hair, Elizabeth C., Justin Jager, and Sarah Garret. 2001. "Background for Community-Level Work on Social Competency in Adolescence: Reviewing the Literature on Contributing Factors." Washington, DC: Child Trends.

This chapter examines the factors that contribute to social competency in adolescents, with emphasis on two aspects: quality social relationships and good social skills. The authors review the literature on the subject, evaluating the antecedents of social relationships, including family relationships, nonfamily adult relationships, and peer relationships. They also review the antecedents of social skills, including conflict resolution skills, intimacy skills, and pro-social behaviors. The chapter also includes a table of targeted activities to improve adolescent social relationships and social skills, organized into columns of interventions that experiments have shown to work, interventions that experiments have shown don't work, interventions that received mixed reviews, and the "best bets" of interventions that have not been experimentally tested.

Under the antecedents of social relationships, the authors begin by reviewing the literature on family relationships. They find that quality relationships with parents are associated with the development of strong social skills, and also positively affect the development of other social relationships, such as romantic relationships and friendships. There is some evidence to suggest that interventions may improve the quality of parent-child relationships, but most programs have not been experimentally evaluated on representative populations. Positive relationships with other family members, including siblings and grandparents, can influence other social relationships, and the development of social skills, although neither is as important as parent-child relationships. For both kinds of relationships, most studies were either correlation or cross-sectional, and therefore were not able to document the causal nature of the relationship. Researchers also agree that relationships with respected unrelated adults can transmit social skills in ways that are similar to relationships with parents. Research suggests that parent-child relationships influence the development of relationships with other adults. The authors note that more research on this kind of relationship is necessary. Social relationships with peers, including both romantic and platonic relationships, can also promote social skills in adolescents. Girls participate in more and closer peer relationships than boys, but this difference becomes less pronounced as adolescents age.

The gender of the adolescent is important for predicting the quality of parent, sibling, grandparent, nonfamily adult, and platonic peer relationships, with females generally having more and closer relationships.

The authors also review the literature on social skills. Research on conflict resolution skills suggests that these skills are important for social success and development, although the research tends to be either cross-sectional or longitudinal. Strong intimacy skills are associated



with better performance in school, better social adjustment, higher self-esteem, and a lower likelihood of depression. Pro-social behaviors (voluntary behaviors intended to benefit another person) are also associated with positive social and emotional outcomes. These behaviors are influenced by individual and family relationships, as well as by classroom environment. Urban children tend to be less pro-social than rural children.

The authors conclude that children with good social relationships and social skills have better academic outcomes and psychological well-being. Adolescents with poor social relationships and skills are at a higher risk of problematic and high-risk behavior. The authors found that family characteristics, proximity to nonfamilial adults, neighborhood characteristics, individual characteristics, and gender were all contributors to the quality of social relationships. There are few experimentally evaluated programs that concentrate on social relationships, but mentoring programs and skills training programs have been shown to have some positive effects. The authors found that individual characteristics such as sociability and self-esteem were important determinants of social skills, as was the presence of siblings. There was strong evidence that that programs to improve social skills can be effective.

The authors note that more research is needed on social relationships and social skills, including more experimental evaluations of youth programs.

Howard, Sue, J. Dryden, and B. Johnson. 1999. "Childhood Resilience: Review and Critique of Literature." *Oxford Review of Education* 25(3).

This paper presents a brief review and critique of the most influential literature in the area (i.e., Rutter 1994; Garmezy 1994; and Werner and Smith 1988, 1990) and examines, in particular, the way in which the concept of resilience has been taken up in the educational literature. The paper concludes by suggesting that while the twin concepts of risk and resilience have been carefully explored in the research reviewed, there is room for further work in this area. Future studies, especially those which are to have an applied focus, should be guided by three principles: (1) adopt a theoretical and practical ecological framework; (2) be mindful of the social context within which the research is carried out; and (3) take account of children's understanding of the key concepts, which may well differ from those of the adult researchers.

Kline, Bruce E., and Elizabeth B. Short. 1991. "Changes in Emotional Resilience: Gifted Adolescent Females." *Roeper Review* 13(3).

This study examines the changes in resilience that gifted adolescent girls experience during school years. It reviews the literature on the subject, noting that after age 3, girls and boys experience a different socialization path. The authors distributed a questionnaire to 89 girls in 9th through 12th grade, 15 in 5th through 8th grade, and 16 in 1st through 4th grade, all of whom were in school programs for the gifted. The results showed that 9th–12th grade girls had



lower self-confidence, higher levels of perfectionism, and worse relationships with parents than younger girls. High school girls had higher levels of discouragement than 5th–8th grade girls. Self-perceived abilities and confidence fell each year. Girls became more vulnerable to depression, worry, and fear as they got older. The authors concluded that, while junior high is an important time for gifted girls because many begin to shift toward negative feelings, senior high school is the most at-risk time.

Lamborn, Susie D., Nina S. Mounts, Laurence Steinberg, and Sanford M. Dornbusch. 1991. “Patterns of Competence and Adjustment among Adolescents from Authoritative, Authoritarian, Indulgent, and Neglectful Families.” *Child Development* 62(5).

This article examines the relationship between adolescents’ outcomes in several categories (including psychosocial development, school achievement, internalized distress, and problem behavior) and their parents’ parenting styles. Parenting styles were evaluated along two dimensions—acceptance/involvement and strictness/supervision. Outcomes and parenting styles were both measured through self-reports by the adolescent subjects. The literature predicts that authoritative parenting styles tend to be associated with the most positive outcomes in children, and that children of authoritarian and permissive families experience more problems. The authors argue for the need to divide the category of permissive families into “neglectful” and “indulgent,” consistent with Baumrind (1989). The authors expand Baumrind’s analysis by using self-reported rather than observed data, and by drawing an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse sample.

The authors distributed surveys to 10,000 high school students in Wisconsin and California. The surveys included questions about demographic data, as well as assessments of parenting style and self-reports of social and academic competence. Self-reliance scores were higher among girls than boys, but for most variables boys and girls demonstrated similar patterns.

Subjects who described their parents as authoritative had the highest scores on competence and the lowest scores on psychological and behavioral dysfunction. Those who described their parents as authoritarian scored well on obedience and conformity, but had lower self-conceptions. Adolescents with indulgent parents had higher rates of substance abuse but higher self-confidence. The authors find that their conclusions support the division of analysis of “permissive” families into “neglectful” and “indulgent” categories, as there are measurably differences between these two types of families. Although the influence of parenting style on outcomes was modest, it was predictable according to theory and consistent with the hypothesis.

Luthar, Suniya S. 1991. “Vulnerability and Resilience: A Study of High-Risk Adolescents.” *Child Development* 62.



This article examines the factors that contribute to children's ability to engage in socially competent behaviors despite stress. Previous research suggests a number of factors that contribute to resilience among preadolescent children—this article seeks to examine whether the same variables are protective in adolescence. This work, following from previous studies, uses social competence, rather than the absence of psychopathologies, to measure resilience. The research gathered data from 144 inner-city ninth graders. The average age of the children was 15.3 years old, and most came from a family of low socioeconomic status. Surveys were distributed to children during two 45-minute class periods. Social competence was measured through peer and teacher ratings, and grades in school, while stress was measured through scores on a negative life events scale. The authors compared this information to personal moderator variables including internal locus of control, social skills, and ego development. The author found that internality and social skills protected against stress. The author also found that resilient children had more depression and anxiety than similarly competent children under less stress. She found that, contrary to expectations, both positive life events and intelligence were vulnerability factors. Following Anthony (1987), the author suggests that positive life events might contribute to a perception of uncertainty that may leave children vulnerable to a future shock.

The results found, in contrast to other studies, that demographic variables were not significantly related to adjustment. Socioeconomic status was not a factor. The author suggested that this might be a consequence of a generally low SES sample. Gender did not have a significant impact on adjustment—it was the least influential of any variable examined.

Murray Nettles, Sandra, and Joseph H. Pleck. 1996. "Risk, Resilience, and Development: The Multiple Ecologies of Black Adolescents in the United States." In *Stress, Risk, and Resilience in Children and Adolescents: Processes, Mechanisms and Interventions*, edited by Robert J. Haggerty, Lonnie R. Sherrod, Norman Garmezy, and Michael Rutter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This article examines current studies on resiliency among black adolescents in the United States. Although black adolescents show higher levels of risk outcomes in education, health, employment, police involvement, and sexual behavior than white adolescents, their rates of alcohol use, drug use and depression are comparable to or lower than white adolescent rates. High rates of problematic behaviors may be considered risk factors themselves for future negative outcomes, although the link between different types of behavior tends to be weaker for black than for white adolescents. The authors delineate two main categories of protective factors: external (community, parenting) and internal (self-esteem, efficacy). For black adolescents in particular, the authors focus on poverty and being raised in a single-parent family resulting from a teen birth as powerful familial risk factors, and "ecological factors" such as



school type and educational norms as powerful protective factors. One study that the authors review on the relationship between neighborhood SES and delinquency shows differential effects for males and females; males living in less affluent neighborhoods reported less criminal behavior whereas disorganization and affluence appeared to have no effect on female delinquency. The authors advocate programmatic interventions that (1) incorporate needs assessments that evaluate both risk and protective factors, (2) build upon cultural and gender specific protective and risk factors, and (3) incorporate developmental processes.

O'Donnell, Deborah A., M. E. Schwab-Stone, and A. Z. Muyeed. 2002. "Multidimensional Resilience in Urban Children Exposed to Community Violence." *Child Development* 73(4).

The aim of this study was twofold. The first goal was to garner statistical support for the existence of multidimensional resilience in which adaptive success consisting of both covert mental health and overt social competence involves different coping skills and possesses different resilience outcomes. The second goal of this study was to evaluate the extent to which family, school, and peer support factors contribute to these different dimensions of resilience, both cross-sectionally and longitudinally, in children with various levels of community violence exposure. A sample of 2,600 6th, 8th, and 10th graders from an urban public school district took part in a comprehensive survey of high-risk and adaptive behaviors and structural equation modeling was used to specify the relation among seven domains of resilience and parent, school, and peer support among children who had been victimized by community violence, those who had witnessed such violence, and a no-exposure control group. The study's findings suggest that there are differences in the sociodemographic and adaptive characteristic profiles of children who have been exposed to varying levels of community violence. In terms of demographic characteristics, violence-exposed children, regardless of witness or victim status, were more likely to be male, black, receive free lunch, and have repeated a grade. However, in terms of adaptive characteristics, children with no violence exposure and those who had witnessed violence had similar outcomes, while children who had been victimized by violence fared worse. Those victimized by violence were more likely to have low future expectations; use alcohol and other drugs; engage in delinquent behavior and school misconduct; and exhibit symptoms of depression, anxiety, and somatization. Finally, the study revealed no consistent patterns when differences in the presence of protective factors were looked at across the three groups; however, all three support indices were most influential overall in affecting resilience outcomes among children who had been victimized by violence, followed by youth who had witnessed violence and those who had experienced no violence exposure, respectively. Overall, the findings support previous arguments made by Rutter (1987) and Sameroff and Seifer (1995) in that it often takes the presence of a substantial number of risk factors in the life of a child before deleterious consequences begin to appear—it may be only when children become victims of violence that multiple nonadaptive behaviors become apparent.



Patterson, Joan M. 2002. "Integrating Family Resilience and Family Stress Theory." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 64.

With the proliferation of research on resilience and applications in practice, confusion has resulted in defining resilience and in deciding who is resilient, particularly when a family is the unit of analysis. In this article, the author addresses three issues contributing to this confusion and tries to clarify the concept of family resilience. While there are multiple sources that contribute to the confusion surrounding resilience, the author focuses on the following three issues: (1) the different uses of the concept of resilience among researchers and practitioners; (2) the lack of differentiation between (a) resilience as an outcome, (b) the characteristics or protective factors that contribute to families being resilient, (c) the nature and extent of risk exposure, and (d) the process of resilience; and (3) the unit of analysis (i.e., how is a resilient family different from a resilient individual?). Empirical support for the perspective on family resilience developed in this article is drawn from studies of family adaptation when a child member is faced with a certain degree of significant stress. Upon a review of the literature within this domain, the author argues that the knowledge derived from family resilience studies can contribute to the resiliency approach being used in practice settings. However, the article calls for a greater understanding of how families remain or become competent following exposure to risk, which requires rigor and precision in the methodologies employed to capture these dynamic processes in families. Thus, the following strategies are recommended for future studies: (1) Provide clear conceptual and operational definitions of key variables, (2) Develop and test conceptual models for risk and protective processes, (3) Study populations of families experiencing significant risk, (4) Conduct longitudinal studies, and (5) Include qualitative methods in research.

Rak, Carl F., and L. E. Patterson. 1996. "Promoting Resilience in At-Risk Children." *Journal of Counseling and Development* 74.

This article discusses resiliency as it refers to positive outcomes in at-risk children, reviews studies that have helped identify how and why some at-risk children prosper in spite of risk, and considers the specific protective or buffering factors that prove helpful to these children. Rather than hypothesizing a bleak future for at-risk children, the article finds hope in protective factors including the temperament of the child, unexpected sources of support in the family and community, and self-esteem that lead to a majority of at-risk children to succeed in life. By providing a conceptual base for practitioners within the counseling field, the article urges counselors to look for the protective factors operating for specific clients and to find ways to maximize protective factors experienced by at-risk children.

Reimer, Michele S. 2002. "Gender, Risk, and Resilience in the Middle School Context." *Children and Schools* 24(1).



This article explores the ways that gender is related to stress and coping during early adolescence. It takes into account academic achievement, puberty and sexuality, and mental health. The author reviews the relevant literature, and discusses the implications for social work practice. A body of literature suggests that adolescence is particularly difficult for girls, because of the social construction of gender. Early adolescence is a period of “gender intensification,” where gender differences become more of a focus of identification. Many girls experience declines in self-esteem and a loss of academic self-confidence during early adolescence. Adolescence often brings body image difficulties and eating disorders. By late adolescence, females tend to have a more ruminative, less action-focused coping style than boys. Many contributors to success in middle school favor boys—boys tend to receive more praise, more specific monitoring, and more teacher attention, especially in math and science class. Girls are more likely to be targets of sexual harassment. One study showed that the brightest girls are at the highest risk of attributing their failures to personal inadequacy, leading to lower confidence and avoidance of challenges. Girls are more likely to develop depression and eating disorders, while boys more frequently show problems with attention and behavioral control. Another study notes that boys higher rates of impulsivity and ‘acting out’, and their discomfort with seeking help raise their risk of interpersonal conflicts, severe depression, and suicidal feelings. The author concludes that understanding the contributions of gender to developmental difficulties can help school social workers better respond to these difficulties.

Secombe, Karen. 2002. “ ‘Beating the Odds’ Versus ‘Changing the Odds’: Poverty, Resilience, and Family Policy.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 64.

This article reviews what is known about families in poverty, both its deleterious consequences and the factors that enable families to rebound from the disruptive life challenges associated with poverty. This review has three substantive areas: (a) an overview of the scope of poverty and the growing disparity in incomes, (b) the consequences of poverty for adults and children, and (c) strategies for improving the resiliency of impoverished families. Using a structuralist approach, the author suggests that resiliency cannot be understood or improved in significant ways by merely focusing on individual-level factors, but rather careful attention must be paid to the structural deficiencies in our society and to the social policies that families need in order to become stronger, more competent, and better functioning in adverse situations. It is argued that poverty is a social problem, not merely a personal one, and meaningful solutions and ways of coping must be structural in nature. The author concludes with several recommendations for researchers within this realm: (1) Researchers should get policymakers invested in the research and its outcomes; (2) Researchers should use the media to their advantage to publicize the project and its outcomes; and (3) Research findings must be made accessible and understandable to the educated nonscientist.



Smokowski, Paul R. 1998. “Prevention and Intervention Strategies for Promoting Resilience in Disadvantaged Children.” *Social Service Review* 72(3).

This article addresses the emergence of a resilience-based prevention practice perspective that focuses on positively affecting the development of disadvantaged, at-risk children and attempts to bridge the gap between theory and practice by reviewing relevant issues in program design, implementation, and evaluation from a resilience perspective. The author highlights that as the fields of resilience research and applied prevention programming mature, a solid foundation exists for resilience-based prevention practice. However, continued development can be readily enhanced by increasing the sophistication in mapping critical risk and protective processes by problem area, gender, developmental stage, age, and ethnicity as well-delineated risk and protective processes have great utility for program planners in designing prevention packages. Overall, the author argues that broad-based prevention programs that teach skills, impart information, and enhance access to resources have made important strides toward ameliorating risk by mobilizing crucial protective mechanisms.

Talbott, Elizabeth, and Keith Thiede. 1999. “Pathways to Antisocial Behavior among Adolescent Girls.” *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders* 7(1).

This study examines possible antisocial pathways and risk factors for antisocial behavior in adolescent girls. It attempts to determine whether there is continuity in antisocial behavior in girls across a three-year period during adolescence, and whether particular developmental risk factors predict particular antisocial behaviors.

Previous research on antisocial behaviors has concentrated on boys, identifying three main pathways—an authority conflict pathway, a covert pathway, and an overt pathway. Research on antisocial behavior in girls is relatively new.

The study draws on data from the NLSY, conducted between 1977 and 1981. The survey included 1,725 boys and girls from across the United States. The ages of the girls ranged from 11 to 17, with an average of 13.8. Using responses to the survey, the authors were able to assemble data on the antisocial constructs that the girls participated in, including drinking, school troubles, disruptive activities, vandalism, fighting, and stealing, as well as data on family risk factors, school risk factors, peer risk factors, and individual risk factors. The authors used regression models to evaluate the relationships between risk factors and antisocial activities, and structural equation modeling to analyze the covariance of the variables.

The study finds that participation in behaviors such as disruptive acts, vandalism, and fighting tends to predict future participation in such antisocial behaviors. However drinking in the first wave of the study does not predict drinking by the third wave—in fact, those girls who reported drinking during the first wave were significantly less likely than their peers to report



drinking by the third wave. There were significant positive relationships between school troubles in wave one and disruption and fighting in wave three, disruption in wave one and drinking in wave three, and vandalism in wave one and fighting in wave three. Analysis of risk factors found that low grade point average was related positively to school troubles, and associating with antisocial peers was related positively to antisocial behavior generally.

The authors recommend that further research is necessary to determine whether antisocial pathways previously identified for boys also apply to girls.

Werner, Emmy E., and Ruth S. Smith. 1989. "Significant Discriminators between Resilient Children and Youth and Peers with Coping Problems." In *Vulnerable but Invincible: A Longitudinal Study of Resilient Children and Youth*. New York: Adams, Banister, Cox.

Werner and Smith track 698 individuals from the Hawaiian island of Kauai from their prenatal period to young adulthood. Their analysis measures the biological, social, environmental, and psychological factors that contribute to positive or negative social outcomes at various points in the lives of high-risk children (children exposed to chronic poverty, higher-than-average rates of perinatal risk, and stressful life events). About a third of high-risk children did not develop learning or behavioral problems in adolescence and were thus deemed resilient. This chapter examines the contribution of various child and caregiver variables to child resiliency over time. The authors frame resiliency as a balance between biological and environmental risk, stressful life events, the protective characteristics of a child, and the protective aspects of the child's caregiving environment. They perform forward stepwise discriminant analysis of predictors for high-risk resilient children and children who developed serious coping problems at ages 10 and 18. They find that the characteristics of the caregiving environment became increasingly important relative to the characteristics of the child over time. Constitutional factors such as health and temperament played the most significant role in infancy and early childhood, the emotional support of nonparental caregivers and verbal and reasoning skills in middle childhood, and external supports and personality traits in later childhood and adolescence. The relative importance of caregiving and characteristic variables vary by gender of the child. The authors tested for ameliorative factors that distinguished between resilient and nonresilient low-income children but not between resilient and nonresilient middle- or high-income children. They found that good health, autonomy and self-help skills (for males), positive social orientation (for females), positive parent-child relationship observed during the second year of life, and emotional support from nonparental family during early and middle childhood contributed to resiliency in low-income children but not in children of other social classes. Protective factors played a greater role in the lives of resilient children who grew up in chronic poverty and had a high number of stressful life events than their less impoverished and less stressed counterparts.



Werner, Emmy E., and Ruth S. Smith. 1989. "Resilient Youth: Perspectives on Coping and Sources of Security." In *Vulnerable but Invincible: A Longitudinal Study of Resilient Children and Youth*. New York: Adams, Banister, Cox.

This chapter describes the contributions of informal and formal sources of support for resilient children on the island of Kauai. Resilient children and youth had significantly fewer contacts with community social service providers such as welfare or health offices agencies than their nonresilient counterparts. Resilient youth drew more effectively on informal sources of support than youth that developed serious coping problems in adolescence. They most commonly drew on peer friends as informal sources of support, followed by older friends, parents, ministers, and teachers, in that order. Qualitative interviews with resilient youth revealed that informal support usually took the form of talking or receiving counsel on problems rather than material or other more concrete forms of support. Consistent enforcement of rules and routines in the home environment as well as parent-child relationships characterized by mutual respect also contributed significantly to resiliency in youth. Resilient youth had a favorable attitude toward school as well as realistic expectations for the future more than those who developed coping problems.



ENDNOTES

¹ Under the \$5 billion HOPE VI program, HUD has awarded 446 HOPE VI grants in 166 cities. To date, 63,100 severely distressed units have been demolished and another 20,300 units are slated for redevelopment. Housing authorities that receive HOPE VI grants must also develop supportive services to help both original and new residents attain self-sufficiency. HOPE VI funds will support the construction of 95,100 replacement units, but just 48,800 will be deeply subsidized public housing units. The rest will receive shallower subsidies or serve market-rate tenants or homebuyers.

² The final round of surveys and interviews will occur in 2005, 48 months after baseline.

³ For a full description of the HOPE VI Panel Study methodology, see Popkin et al. (2002).

⁴ Children we identified as “highly engaged in school” are those whose parents gave them the best possible rating out of four options on at least three out of four of the following statements: The child cares about doing well in school; the child only works on schoolwork when forced to; the child does just enough schoolwork to get by; and the child always does his or her homework. This series is taken from the National Survey of America’s Families.

⁵ We did not count as resilient any child whose parent reported that he or she had two or more behavior problems. We used a scale that asks parents to indicate how often their children exhibited six specific behaviors: trouble getting along with teachers, being disobedient in school, hanging around with kids who get in trouble, bullying, being restless or overly active, and being unhappy or depressed. This series is taken from the National Health Interview Survey, 1988.

⁶ We also did not count as resilient any child whose parent reported a child as participating in a delinquent or risky behavior if the child had participated in any of the following activities: gone to juvenile court, had a problem with alcohol or drugs, gotten into trouble with the police, done something illegal to get money, been pregnant or gotten someone else pregnant, been in a gang, or been arrested.

⁷ Living in Chicago, IL, Atlantic City, NJ, Durham, NC, and Richmond, CA, were each included in the model as dichotomous variables, with Washington, DC, excluded as the reference variable.

⁸ 50 of the 54 heads of household in our sample who do not identify themselves as African-American identify themselves as Hispanic.

⁹ We defined head of household as engaged in the child’s educational activities if the head of household reported having, in the last year, attended a school meeting; gone to a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference; and attended a school or class event, such as a play, sports event, or science fair.

¹⁰ We designated a child as participating in after-school activities if the head of household reported that the child participates in any of the following activities ‘almost every day’: sports team at a school or community center; a school club such as student government, language club, or band; or a recreational club, such as the Boys and Girls club.



¹¹ Our sample includes 374 children between 6 and 17 who were selected at random as “focal children” for purposes of the survey (see Popkin et al. 2002). Just over half (52 percent) of the children are girls, and the median age is 12.

¹² The only notable difference across the five study sites was that parents from Chicago were significantly more likely to report that their children were highly engaged in school, which meant that a higher proportion of children from Chicago scored as resilient overall.

¹³ Our sample of girls is better off on every measure that makes up our definition of resiliency, and the average nonresilient boy had more problems than his nonresilient female counterpart. This is consistent with the literature on behavioral outcomes for boys and girls. (Chung and Elias 1996; Reimer 2002)

¹⁴ After controlling for factors including gender, age, site, and whether the child’s family relocated because of HOPE VI redevelopment, these children were more likely than the typical child in our sample to be highly engaged in school, less likely to have been held back in school, and less likely to have two or more behavior problems ($p < .05$). However, they were not significantly more or less likely to have been suspended, excluded, or expelled from school; or to have engaged in a delinquent or risky behavior.

¹⁵ As with children of heads of household with a high school diploma, after controlling for factors including gender, age, site, and whether the child’s family relocated because of HOPE VI redevelopment, children of engaged parents were more likely than other children in our sample to be highly engaged in school, less likely to have been held back in school, and less likely to have two or more behavior problems ($p < .01$). We defined an actively engaged head of household as one who reported having, in the last year, attended a school meeting; gone to a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference; and attended a school or class event, such as a play, sports event, or science fair. Just under half (46 percent) of heads of household in our sample were actively engaged in their children’s education.

¹⁶ We use the term “parental depression” because HOPE VI Panel Study heads of household include some who are the fathers or grandparents of the focal children. The relationship between parental depression and resiliency for the HOPE VI sample is significant at the .10 level.

¹⁷ After controlling for factors including gender, age, site, and whether the child’s family relocated because of HOPE VI redevelopment, children who are “admired and well liked by other children” are significantly more likely to be highly engaged in school and less likely to have two or more behavior problems than other children ($p < .001$).

¹⁸ After controlling for factors including gender, age, site, and whether the child’s family relocated because of HOPE VI redevelopment, this relationship is significant at the .001 level.

¹⁹ We designated a child as participating in an after-school activity if his or her head of household reported that the child participates in a sports team, club, or after-school activity at least once a week.

After controlling for factors including gender, age, site, and whether the child’s family relocated because of HOPE VI redevelopment, children who participate in after school-activities are less likely to have two or more behavior problems, and less likely to have been held back than other children, but not significantly



more or less likely to have been suspended, expelled, or excluded from school than other children, or to have engaged in any of the listed delinquent behaviors ($p < .10$)