

## Resilience

*This brief is the fourth in a four-part series, [Relationships, Routines, Resilience: Reopening with the Three Rs](#), designed to share some of the key practices, strategies and structures to support students' return to in-person school. Each brief includes the science grounding, implications for practice, and resources.*

### THE SCIENCE

The science of learning and development tells us that [learning is integrated](#) – for example, no “math” part of the brain develops separately from a “self-regulation” part of the brain. Therefore, successful learning experiences simultaneously develop content-specific knowledge along with the skills and mindsets described in Turnaround’s [Building Blocks for Learning](#). Resilience is an upper-level skill in the Building Blocks, resting on a foundation of other skills, like self-awareness, self-regulation, and stress management.

In the brain, students are building anatomically cross-wired and functionally interconnected neural networks that facilitate skills like self-regulation while also helping them think, learn and remember content knowledge. For example, as a student works to regulate their emotions, remember new information and organize their thinking, they are using structurally and functionally interconnected processes in the amygdala, hippocampus and prefrontal cortex.



### THE PRACTICE

In classrooms, this means that academic instruction and student supports are most effective when they are driven by a holistic picture of the learner with unique skills, habits, mindsets, interests, relationships, experiences, knowledge and goals. Growth and learning emerge through real experiences and authentic practice over time that shifts the balance of power towards students, recognizing them as [active agents](#) within the learning process.

These active, integrated processes of learning and development occur in [context](#), building upon students’ relationships, prior experiences and knowledge, and the broader ecosystem in which they are developing. The presence of positive relationships with adults who know children well buffers the negative impact of stress on the brain and supports the co-regulatory processes through which students develop skills like self-regulation and resilience. These skills and mindsets that adults in children’s contexts demonstrate form the model through which students acquire their own skills and mindsets. For example, a group of educators who consistently embody a growth mindset, demonstrate

strong stress management, and take a productive approach to conflict facilitate the development of such skills and mindsets in students, including their ability to be resilient in face of challenges.

Finally, the science of learning and development tells us that each student is on their own [unique developmental pathway](#). Systems of intervention and enrichment that account for variability and jagged learning profiles and provide matched supports for both holistic development and academic growth are required for each student to reach the full expression of their potential. Within these systems, acknowledgment of the impact of stress and adversity on learning and development points towards targeted efforts to reduce stress in students’ lives while intentionally teaching and supporting stress management techniques.

In summary:

Knowledge, skill, and mindset building IS NOT:	Knowledge, skill, and mindset building IS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An isolated program, add-on, or enrichment activity.</li> <li>• For some students and not others, or the same for each student</li> <li>• About controlling students and keeping adults comfortable</li> <li>• Acculturating children to a White, heteropatriarchal set of behavioral norms and enforcing compliance with these norms</li> <li>• Asking students to demonstrate grit or resilience without addressing sources of chronic stress, including structural racism and systemic oppression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When learning experiences simultaneously develop content knowledge and disciplinary ways of thinking alongside the skills and mindsets of the Building Blocks for Learning</li> <li>• Holistic supports and enrichment matched to the unique developmental pathway of each student</li> <li>• Prioritizing relationships that support students in developing skills through observation and interaction</li> <li>• Recognizing that stress impacts learning</li> </ul>

## RESOURCES

- ❑ Turnaround’s [Well-Being Index](#) - a tool designed to help educators collect holistic data – physical, social, psychological, emotional well-being – systematically, directly, quickly, and in real time, thus empowering students to own their stories and inviting them into the problem-solving process.
- ❑ Turnaround’s Toolbox for Whole Child Design – [Knowledge, Skill and Mindset Building](#)  
Specific tools include:
  - Support Student Strategies: Stress Management to Resilience – a set of tools to support students’ skill development, including their stress management and in turn, resilience.
  - Co-Regulation Planner: Executive Functions to Self-Direction – a set of tools to build skills through co-regulation, including executive functions that support self-direction and agency.
  - Integrated Skills Planner – a tool to help educators plan for integrated skills development.
- ❑ Greater Good Science Center’s [California SEL Modules](#)