

When They Come Home Deflated: A Grown-Up's Turn

From the practice of Elliott McCray, Ed.S., The McCray Learning Lab

What this builds (transformative SEL): Agency (“I can do it”) with a thread of Identity (“Who I am”).

This is the grown-up companion to “**Stay Strong: A Resilience Toolkit**,” for parents, caregivers, and teachers of Black children. It practices what to do the day your child comes home carrying something unfair: **steady yourself first, validate the feeling before you fix it, affirm who they are, hand their voice back, and protect their joy**. The three words your child learns in “Stay Strong” (**resilience, identity, voice**) become your four moves here.

The four moves, ready to grab

- First: Validate → “That was unfair, and I can see how much it hurt.”
- Then: Affirm → “There is nothing wrong with you. You come from greatness.”
- Then: Share the wheel → “Let’s figure out together what YOU want to do.”
- Always: Protect the joy → “That day was theirs; this one is ours.”

Three things stay true in every line: **stay grounded, never perform outrage** (the story never models a grown-up getting big and loud: it models a calm a child can borrow); **never minimize** (“you’re fine,” “brush it off,” “it doesn’t matter” are always the warmly redirected option, never the answer); and **you know your child**: these are starting points, not scripts.

This is a **practice tool for rehearsing skills, not therapy, counseling, or a clinical service**. And it never shames the grown-up: every instinct (to fix, to minimize, to march down to the school) comes straight from love; this is just practice for the words and the calm.

Want the kid version? [Open “Stay Strong: A Resilience Toolkit”](#) and read it with your child: the same three words, told from Auntie Nia’s side.

Your privacy: if you use the optional “say it” recorder, your voice stays on this device: it is never saved, never uploaded, and it is gone when the page closes.

From The McCray Learning Lab. Elliott McCray, Ed.S.

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