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# Caregivers' perceptions of displayed resilience among preschool aged children living in a South African children's home.

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**ABSTRACT**

This study explored caregivers' perceptions of displayed resilience in children living in a South African Children's home and what they perceived the origins of this resilience to be. In South Africa, the incidence of orphaned and vulnerable children has risen substantially due to factors such as HIV/AIDS, poverty and unemployment. Previous research found that children in care centres are often at risk of developmental delays and deficits. However, in recent years, there has been a shift in focus to the protective factors associated with resilience and positive outcomes for these children. This qualitative study aimed to explore these protective factors and how they lead to the development of resilience. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory was used to explore the various structures that influence childhood development. This was then applied to the care centre environment and the development of resilience using Bernard's theory. Semi-structured interviews with the caregivers' with open-ended questions were used to gain the data. Thematic content analysis was then used to transcribe, examine and categorize the data. The themes that emerged during the data analysis indicated that the caregivers' perceptions were consistent with literature on the factors needed for the development of resilience. These findings showed that both internal and external factors are needed for resilience to emerge; these were then explored in more detail. The findings suggest although children in the centre are vulnerable, there are protective factors which lead to more positive outcomes in their lives. The limitations of the study are discussed as well as suggestions for further research.

## DECLARATION

I, Amy Jane Kerr, hereby declare that this research report is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Educational Psychology by Coursework and Research Dissertation (Full-Time) at the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

_____

Amy Jane Kerr

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Date

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