



Health Care Agency
Behavioral Health Services
Prevention & Intervention

Stress and Parenting

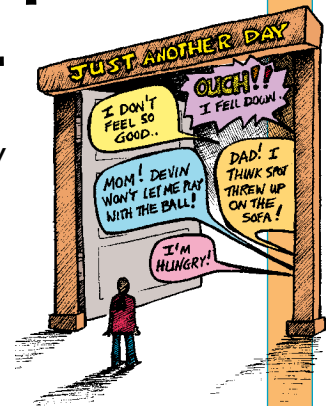


Kids. You love them like crazy. They drive you crazy. Relax. Stress is a normal part of parenting. Take a look at these tips. Learn how to manage stress, so you can manage the kids – and everything else. For more information, visit www.parenting.org or call the Girls and Boys Town National Hotline at 1-800-448-3000.

Parenting is a tough job. It seems like there's never enough time, money, sleep or help. No wonder you get stressed! These tips will help you manage the stress of being a parent.

Stress is a normal part of parenting.

- All parents feel stress at times.
- Illness, a new baby or other family changes can increase stress.
- Knowing how to handle stress will help you become a better parent.



Don't try to do it all.

- Juggling family, housework, a job – it's a lot for anyone to handle.
- When possible, share household jobs. Have everyone in the family pitch in.
- Ask a friend, neighbor or relative if they can help.

Catch special moments with your kids.

- Talk while doing dishes. Make cleaning up a game.
- Listen to music while sharing everyday chores.
- Make the walk or ride to school your special time together.



Taking care of yourself will help with stress.

- Eat well and get plenty of rest. (When you're tired or hungry, every little thing seems big.)
- Avoid alcohol, drugs and caffeine. They can make you feel worse.
- Exercise is a great way to lower stress. Take a walk – with or without your kids.

Take a break when you can.

- Get away from the family once in a while. Trade baby-sitting with a friend or neighbor.
- Every day, do something just for you. Watch your favorite TV show. Take a walk. Read a book.



Talking with other parents can help you cope with stress.

- Consider taking a parenting class.
- Look online for parenting support and resources.
- Call your local office of education or health department to find parenting classes in your area.
- Ask advice from friends, family and neighbors.

Know when to get help.

- If you feel out of control or are afraid you might hurt your child, get help right away.
- Make a list of people you can call when you feel stressed – family, friends or neighbors. Keep it near the phone.
- If you feel stressed a lot, talk to a doctor or counselor.



Here are 10 things you can do to relieve stress right now.

1. Give yourself a time-out. Fifteen minutes by yourself can really help.
2. Take 10 slow, deep breaths.
3. Look at a special photo of you and your child.
4. Exercise. Jog in place. Dance.
5. Call a friend.
6. Change the scenery. Take everyone for a ride or walk.
7. Cry or yell. (Do this away from your kids so you won't scare them.)
8. Write your feelings down.
9. Remember, this stressful time will soon pass.
10. Forgive yourself. Say out loud, "I am a good parent. I can handle this."

This pamphlet is not a substitute for professional medical care. If you have questions or concerns, please talk with a health care provider.

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