



Pause for a child.

Relieving Stress

Caring for your family and home, juggling finances and a busy schedule, and working hard or hunting for employment can leave you weary.

Yelling, becoming easily angered, or physically lashing out at your children could be happening more often than you'd like. Or maybe instead of venting, you've become depressed, withdrawn or emotionally detached.

If either of these scenarios describes you, stress may be taking a toll. Surprisingly, it can affect your children, too.

While everyone's needs may differ, families can practice some common strategies to reduce anxiety, and in the process, grow closer.

- **SCHEDULE** regular family meetings and allow everyone (children and adults) to express concerns without interruption.
- **ELIMINATE CHAOS** by doing household chores together. Reinforce that you're working as a team to keep your home clean and organized.
- **BE A GOOD LISTENER.** Don't always criticize, offer advice or provide solutions. Sometimes allowing a person to talk is the best medicine.
- **PLAY MUSIC** and dance. It's great exercise and lightens the mood.
- **LIMIT ACCESS TO TV** and Internet news that may cause anxiety or fear.
- Take a few minutes of **QUITE TIME** for yourself, and with your child, everyday.
- **ACCEPT** that ups and downs are part of life, and learn to handle them in positive ways. Your children are watching how you react so they can follow your lead.

Life can be stressful. As families, we often feel overworked and overscheduled. Children and adults feel the effects of our busy lives, so it's important as parents that we're aware of stress in our families as well as the best ways to cope when it occurs.

3 Steps to tackle stress with your family:

1. **Talk about it.** Keep lines of communication open so that every family member feels comfortable voicing their feelings if they start to feel stressed.
2. **Take a break.** If you think your kids might be overwhelmed by activities, ask them about it, then take action.
3. **Set group priorities.** One of the biggest causes of family stress is simply TOO MUCH TO DO in a short period of time. Sit down as a family and make decisions about activities that are most important to all of you.



Pause for a child.

STRESS FOR ADULTS vs STRESS FOR CHILDREN		
What are the most common causes of stress? (Note differences and similarities.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs/employment • Finances • Family/relationships • Personal health & safety • Death of a loved one • Obligations/responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-packed schedules • Peer pressure • Bullying/harassment • Self-imposed pressure in school, activities • Any major like changes
What are the signs of stress in me? In my children? (Again, notice similarities!)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety, depression • Insomnia or over-sleeping • Headaches, muscle pain, other physical ailments • Anger, lashing out • Changes in eating habits (over-eating or no eating) • Reliance on alcohol, drugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional changes (sad, irritable, fearful, angry) • Behavior changes (losing their temper, crying) • Physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches) • Changes in interactions with others (withdrawal from social situations)
How can I manage my own stress? How can I help my child? (It's important to be a role model!)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify sources of your stress and make changes if possible (i.e. quit activity) • Recognize how you react to stress so you can be aware when something begins to bother you • Develop a wide variety of stress management skills (SEE BELOW) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help your child understand what stress is by talking about it, giving examples • Support them in making life changes to avoid unnecessary stress (i.e. too many activities) • Teach coping strategies that will empower them to handle stressful situations

SIMPLE STRESS-BUSTING SKILLS YOU (AND YOUR CHILDREN!) CAN DO TODAY:

- Learn to say “no!”
- Take 10 deep breaths
- Exercise regularly
- Find a support group
- Eliminate stimulants (like caffeine)
- Go outside for fresh air
- Spend quality time with family
- Find a hobby you love

