



Pause for a child

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.

	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 life 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, stomachs) 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 OUR 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