

# Dealing With Stress

T I P S F O R P A R E N T S

**S**tress is part of parenting. Whether you are a stay at home parent or a working parent, a married parent or a single parent, parent of one or many children, remaining cool, calm, and collected can be a challenge. Parenting is one of life's most rewarding experiences, but it is not easy.

## Get a Handle on Stress

Know the warning signs of stress overload - headaches, racing heartbeat, anxiety, anger, difficulty concentrating. Look at your daily life and identify times/areas (mealtimes, bedtimes, work deadlines) that cause stress. If you can avoid situations that make you feel stressed or diffuse potential stressful situations, do so.

Remember that you are not alone. Millions of families in our country deal with stressful situations every day.

## Diffuse Your Temper

Try to maintain your temper. When you feel parenting tensions about to explode, take a deep breath, and then another. Remember you are the adult. Pause before you react and pretend you are hearing what your child is about to hear. When you are under stress, it is easy to "explode" when a child is whining or arguing with your decisions. Take a few minutes to calm down before addressing the child.

## Take Care of Yourself

You cannot be an effective parent if you are sick or over-stressed. Taking care of yourself will help you be better prepared to deal with stressful situations.

☺  
*When you feel parenting tensions about to explode, take a deep breath, and then another. Remember you are the adult.*  
☺



Try to eat healthy foods and make sure you get enough sleep at night. Make time for yourself every day and try to fit even a few minutes of exercise into your daily routine. Organize your daily routines whenever possible. Make a list of what needs to be done each day and set priorities. Be realistic! Do not over schedule yourself or try to do too much.

## Don't Let Stress Affect Your Family

Make time for your family every day. When you are over-stressed, your behavior will affect everyone around you - especially your children. What your children want most is your attention. Do whatever you can to eliminate stressful family situations. Be flexible and choose your battles. Give yourself a break and remember that the world will not end if the clothes are not folded today.

## Ask for and Accept Help

Divide household chores with your children. Take your family, friends, and neighbors up on their offers to help or baby sit. Talk about your stress and your parenting challenges with others. Remember that asking for help is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength. Learning to handle stress is good for your health and your family's happiness.



Prevent Child Abuse  
North Carolina

www.preventchildabusenc.org  
1-800-CHILDREN