

Ways to Decrease the Stresses of Parenting

Establish routines – When children know what comes next, they are more cooperative.

Develop simple family rules – Children as young as two years old can help to clear the table.

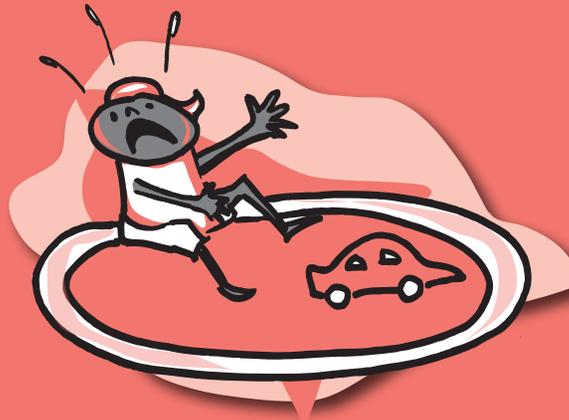
Set limits – Set limits that are fair and clear so that children know what is expected.

Be consistent – Children need to know that you mean what you say. Say only what you are willing to enforce.

Give choices – Allow children to feel in control of their lives by letting them make choices within the boundaries that you set.

Take time to learn how your children develop – The more you learn about what to expect from your children at different ages and stages, the better prepared you will be.

Know your children's friends and their parents – Get to know your child's friends. Invite their parents to your home or spend a few minutes on the phone with them.



*When my kids become wild and unruly,
I use a nice, safe playpen.
When they're finished, I climb out.*

- Erma Bombeck

For Assistance and Information
Call Our

PARENT HELPLINE
(414) 671-0566

www.theparentingnetwork.org

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Artwork by Michael Owen Design (and his son, Brandon)



PARENTING AND MANAGING STRESS



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Signs of Stress

When the demands of life and parenting seem overwhelming, stress develops. Some signs of stress include:

- Yelling and screaming at the children
- Recurrent tiredness during the day
- Frequent tension in the body
- Feeling “on edge”
- “Tuning out” family and others repeatedly
- Feeling the “weight of the world” on your shoulders
- Increased need for outside stimulation to feel good (coffee, food, sex, TV, alcohol, money)
- Loss of appetite and/or difficulty sleeping

When the daily stress of parenting increases, the joy of parenting decreases. While it is not possible to have a stress-free life, too much stress is harmful to your health.



Managing Parenting Stress

Everyone manages stress in his/her own way. Recognizing stress in your body is the first step in taking action toward self-care.

- Pay attention to how you feel and where your tension is present (especially in your neck, face, shoulders, back, chest and stomach).
- Breathe deeply and gently stretch and relax any tense areas.
- **These stress reduction tips may help:**

Walk, work and eat at a relaxed pace.

Listen to music - even sing along!

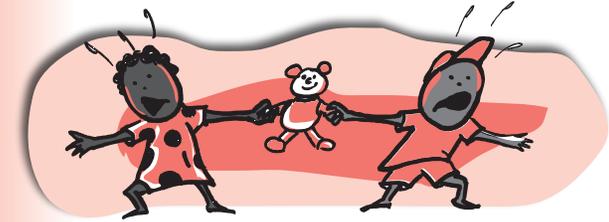
If possible, go outside at least once a day and notice the simple things such as the wind and sounds of nature.

Count to 10..20..30 (and backwards if necessary!)

Phone a friend.

Eat nutritious meals. Cut down on caffeine (coffee, tea, cola, chocolate.)

Find humor in the behavior of your children and other people. Laughter is a powerful stress reliever.



Exercise and get adequate sleep.

Add something beautiful to your life on a daily basis (flowers, music, photos).

Avoid holding in your feelings. Find a safe place to feel and express them. Writing in a journal can be helpful.

*Join a parenting class or a parent support group or call the **Parent Helpline at (414) 671-0566.***

- **Organize & simplify your life!**

Prioritize—do what is most important first and let some things wait until later.

Organize and unclutter your home so that you know where things are.

Prepare for the morning the night before (lunches, clothes, homework, permission slips.)

Allow extra time to get the kids ready.

Dot down notes to help your memory.