



# Household Stress

## *Dial Down Stress*

Some stress is ok, but too much is harmful. It can impact brain development, learning, mental health and physical health. Stress can also hurt relationships by leading us to say and do things we regret. Managing household stress can help adults and children thrive.

## *Tips for Coping with Household Stress*

- You can help your family by taking care of yourself and managing your stress.
- Set realistic goals and be kind to yourself. Don't try to be perfect.
- Move your muscles to manage stress by walking, running, dancing, or any exercise.
- Take extra care of relationships in times of stress. Pause before reacting.
- Take "tech time-outs" from TV and other electronics for periods of family calm.
- Show your children how you manage your own stress in healthy ways.
- Find stress reducers you can use anywhere, like breathing exercises or brief meditations.
- Treat yourself often to happy thoughts, memories, photos, and laughter.
- A healthy, nurturing relationship with you helps children cope with their stress.

## *Why Reduce Family Stress?*

When we manage stress, we can do a better job as a parent or caregiver. We can avoid reacting out of anger, fear, and other stressful feelings. We can also help children grow in healthy ways by keeping them from too much stress.



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# Stress: How much is too much?

- Stress is a normal way for our bodies to deal with challenge or danger. Stress chemicals prepare us to react and respond.
- But when stress is too strong or too long-lasting it can be harmful to children.
- Too much stress is hard on relationships. We might feel edgy, lose our temper, and say or do things we regret.
- Our own stress can also increase stress for children.

## Finding Calm

- We can create a calmer household with structure and routines.
- It's important to limit conflict and yelling--especially around children.
- When we take care of ourselves, we help reduce stress for the whole family.
- We can build resilience in children by showing them positive ways we cope with stress.
- Exercise, hobbies, mindful breathing, meditation, talking with a friend and laughing are just a few ways to bring our bodies into a calmer state and reduce stress chemicals.

## Help in Stressful Times

Some households go through times of extra stress, like a death in the family, poverty or the incarceration of a parent. Children cope best when they have loving support from their caregiver or caregivers. This helps protect them from the harmful impacts of stress. Strong, healthy relationships are important for adults and children. They help families stay well, even in stressful times.



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