



CHILDREN'S
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SOCIETY OF
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Family Education Program materials and podcasts, and information on CHS programs can also be found on our website at www.chs-ca.org.



Corporate Headquarters

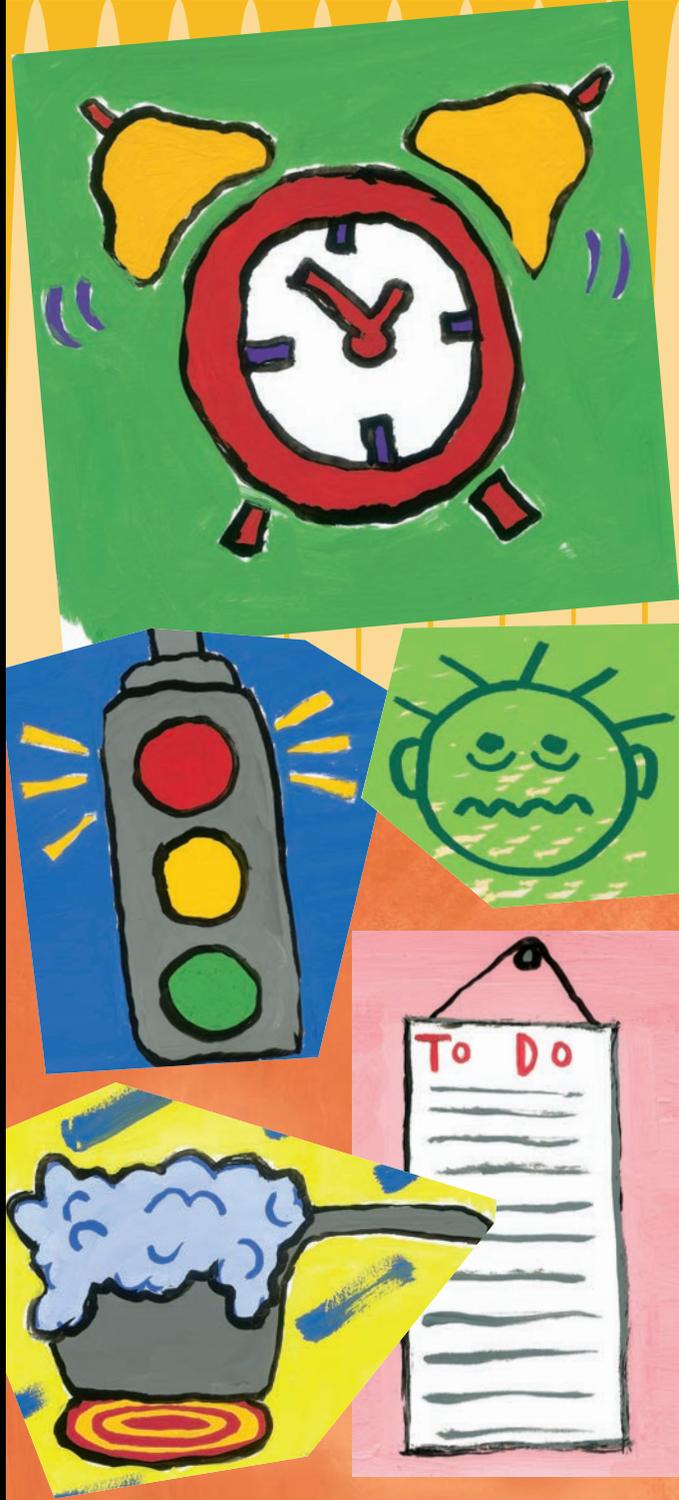
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C H I L D R E N ' S H O M E S O C I E T Y O F C A L I F O R N I A

STRESS

HOW IT AFFECTS YOU AND YOUR CHILD



Being a parent or caregiver can sometimes seem like an overwhelming responsibility. While caring for your child, you are also fulfilling many other roles that can create stress at home, at work, and in other settings. If not recognized and dealt with, stress can affect your physical, emotional, and mental health. As a result, your family environment will be affected, especially your children.





It is important to pay attention to your body to recognize signs of stress so you can take steps to respond in a healthy manner. You may not be able to eliminate causes of stress, but you can reduce and manage it so you can function at your best for yourself and for your child.

★ CAUSES OF STRESS

Stress can be caused by a variety of positive and negative factors or a combination of factors. Some sources of stress are:

- The sickness or death of a loved one
- Hardships affecting family and friends
- Relationship troubles
- Loss of work
- A new job
- Balancing work and family
- A new baby
- Disciplining children
- Financial troubles
- Moving to a new home

★ EFFECTS OF STRESS

Stress can affect you physically, emotionally, and mentally. It may cause you to react to others and situations with less control than you normally would. Listed below are some of the effects that stress may have on you and others.

- Lashing out at children
- Neglecting children
- Problems with relationships
- Difficulties at work
- Health problems
- Disorderly home environment
- Irritability
- Forgetfulness
- Inability to concentrate



★ SIGNS OF STRESS

Your body often tells you when you are under stress. Pay attention to these signs, especially a combination of them.

- Headaches
- Back pain
- High blood pressure
- Frequent sickness
- Unusual weight loss/gain
- Frequent indigestion
- Moodiness
- Feelings of depression
- Stomach aches
- Fatigue
- Difficulty sleeping
- Feelings of anxiety
- Cold sores
- Overeating or undereating

★ REDUCING STRESS

The following suggestions may help to reduce the level of stress in your life.

- Exercise. (You can burn off chemicals that build up in your body during stress.)
- Eat healthy foods. (Avoid processed foods. Eat less sugar and fatty foods and more vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain foods.)
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, drugs, and nicotine.
- Make time to get adequate sleep and rest. (Most adults need an average of eight hours of sleep per day. Children need an average of 10 to 12 hours, depending on their age.)
- Find hobbies you enjoy.
- Get family members involved to help with responsibilities at home.
- Learn to say "no" when you have the option.
- Make a list of "things to do" to eliminate the clutter in your mind.
- Seek support from family and friends.
- Take time to take care of yourself.





Stress is a normal part of living. How you deal with it will greatly impact your family environment as well as how your children learn to cope with stress.



★ FOCUS ON CHILDREN

- The manner in which you manage your own stress greatly influences your children's levels of stress and how they respond to it.
- Try to establish a predictable routine for children to follow. Observe regular times for homework, meals, play, quiet time, and sleep.
- Pay attention to how children react during stressful times by listening to them and observing their body language and behavior.
- Talk with children about their possible pressures and anxieties. They may take a while to express their feelings in words. Discuss solutions together. By showing care and concern through difficult situations, you can help strengthen your relationship with your children.

★ ADDITIONAL HELP

Seek stress management classes and counseling through your local social service agency, hospital, or community center.

Too much stress may cause anxiety, depression, ulcers, heart disease, or aggravate diabetes.

Sometimes you may not feel stressed, but your body shows signs that you need to relax. Slow down, get some rest, and take care of yourself.



TO LEARN MORE

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

GETTING OUT OF A STRESS MESS!

Michaelene Mundy, illustrated by R.W. Alley

HARRIET, YOU'LL DRIVE ME WILD!

Mem Fox, illustrated by Marla Frazee

BOOKS FOR ADULTS

BECOMING THE PARENT YOU WANT TO BE

Laura Davis & Janis Keyser

CARING FOR YOUR SCHOOL-AGE CHILD

American Academy of Pediatrics/Edward L. Schor, M.D., F.A.A.P.

ORGANIZATIONS

HEALTHY CHILDREN

(847) 434-4000 or www.healthychildren.org