

# COPING WITH CHILDHOOD STRESS

## BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



*Feeling overwhelmed? There's a good chance your child is too. Discover how both kids and caregivers can positively cope with stress.*

Caregivers seem to juggle it all- work, family schedules, mealtimes, schoolwork, bills... the list goes on. This can cause major stress! What about your child? It may appear as though children do not stress, but kids today are worrying more than ever. Stress can affect anyone who feels overwhelmed. *Too much stress* can influence the way kids feel, act, and think. Most adults have developed skills to adapt to stressful situations, but for kids - even small changes in their routine can cause stress.

### ***If you notice your child behaving "out of the norm":***

- Set aside time with your child and express concerns
- Give them a safe space to share what they may be feeling and validate those feelings.
- Let your child know you support them.
- Kids may not always be looking for an answer, but just really need someone to listen!



### ***If kids choose not to engage in conversation or respond with "I'm fine", how can caregivers continue to monitor and support their child?***

- Reiterate your support and willingness to listen as needed.
- It may be beneficial to point out your reasons for feeling this way.
- Your child may respond differently to another family member or school counselor.



Stress is part of our lives whether we like it or not. Teaching kids to manage stress in healthy ways at a young age will only help them to succeed later in life. A supportive person to listen and simple coping skills can make a significant difference. Remember - your child is always watching and learning from you, so it is important that they are seeing you demonstrate healthy coping skills as well!

### **WARNING SIGNS OF STRESS:**

- Changes in mood
- Increased irritability
- Anxiety
- Sleep disturbance
- Isolation
- Somatic complaints

### **QUICK CALMING STRATEGIES:**

- Simply taking a break
- Going on a short walk
- Taking deep breaths
- Playing a game
- Practicing mindfulness techniques

### **TRY '5 SENSES':**

- Focus on finding:
- 5 things they can see
  - 4 things they can feel
  - 3 things they can hear
  - 2 things they can smell
  - 1 thing they can taste