

## CHILDREN HAVE STRESS TOO

In the hustle and bustle world adults live in, parents and grandparents tend to look at children and wonder what they have to be stressed about. Even at very young ages, children have a lot of things to feel stressed about! Things they are expected to do, things they do not understand and cannot control create pressure for them.

Stress is a function of the demands placed on us and our ability to meet them. Stress can affect anyone, even a child, if he is feeling overwhelmed. A child feels pressure with school, friends, siblings, new situations, and the separation from parents when they are away from home. And, sometimes, with the best intentions we plan too many activities for young children and they feel stress with the expectation that they need to perform and succeed at an earlier age.

It is not always easy to recognize when your children are stressed out, but by learning to help them balance stress they will cope better with life's challenges.

### SYMPTOMS:

- MOOD SWINGS
- ACTS OUT
- SLEEP PATTERN CHANGES
- BED WETTING
- STOMACHACHES & HEADACHES
- TROUBLE CONCENTRATING/HOMEWORK PROBLEMS
- WITHDRAWN/TOO MUCH ALONE TIME

#### Younger Children

- Sucks Thumb
- Twirls Hair
- Picks Nose

#### Older Children

- Lie
- Bully
- Defy Authority

### TIPS TO HELP HELP REDUCE YOUR CHILD'S STRESS

- GOOD NUTRITION
- MAKE TIME FOR YOUR CHILD EACH DAY
- CUT BACK ON ACTIVITIES
- EXERCISE-- EXERCISE WITH YOUR CHILD

- PREPARE AHEAD FOR STRESSFUL EVENTS  
(ASSURE CHILD—"IT IS OKAY TO BE SCARED")
- READ TOGETHER

Reading References:

- Alexandra and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst
- Tear Soup by Pat Schweibert, Bhuck Deklyen, and Taylor Bills
- Dinosaurs Divorce by Marc Brown and Laurene Krasny Brown

### RECIPE FOR STRESSBALLS

- 1 Grandmother (or parent)
- 1 or more Child
- 3/4 c Cornstarch
- 1/4 c Flour
- 1 Package Balloons
- 1 Funnel
- 1 package Medium sharpies (markers)
- Generous Hugs Add as needed
- Laughter Sprinkle on top

- Empty ingredients (flour and cornstarch) into a bowl, stir. Take funnel and fill balloons; tie balloons; add hugs as appropriate; draw faces and sprinkle with laughter.

- Squeeze stress balls to relieve tension as appropriate.