

School-related stress

School can be a stressful experience for children



Some stress is a normal part of child development, and all children and adolescents will experience school-related stress at some point or another. Many children worry and get stressed about being accepted, grades, transitions to new schools and classes, bullies, not knowing the answer and the overall pressure to succeed.

Children react to stress in different ways based on their age, developmental stage, and reason for the stress. Some children react by changing how they normally act, perhaps by becoming withdrawn or acting out aggressively. Others may go back to behaviors they have grown out of, such as thumb sucking. Stress can also cause headaches and sleep problems.

You can't remove all of the stresses in your child's life, but you can help your child learn to cope with stress by looking for warning signs and providing him or her with tools to reduce and control stress.

What parents can do

- ♥ Establish routines. A set schedule provides children with a sense of comfort and security.
- ♥ Make sure that your child gets plenty of rest, and provide healthy meals to help your child's brain to work at its best.
- ♥ Spend time talking to your child about his or her problems and concerns. What may seem like a small problem to you may be very important to your child.
- ♥ Help your child find solutions and make good decisions by giving examples of ways to solve the problem.
- ♥ Don't sign up your child up to be involved with too many after school activities, but provide opportunities for non-school related activities that allow him or her to be with others, such as scouts and church groups.
- ♥ Have fun with your child and spend time doing activities that he or she likes. This will help your child refocus some of his or her energy on more positive things.
- ♥ Plan down time for your child. All time in your child's schedule when he or she does not have to do anything or be anywhere.



- ♥ Pay attention to what your child says and does not say to get clues that things are getting overwhelming.
- ♥ Communicate with your child's teachers or caregivers and talk about sources of stress and solutions to help your child deal with it.
- ♥ Set a good example by handling your own stress in a positive way. Children learn by example and may deal with stress in the same ways they see adults handle it.

