

## **CAN YOUR CHILD BE STRESSED OUT?**

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**I know that several of us have told our kids how stressed out we are. However, have we thought of the flip side of this conversation? Our kids may also be experiencing stress.**

**Children experience stress for a multitude of reasons, similar to why adults feel stressed. Some common examples of stressors are: issues with kids at school, pressure from assignments at school; and all the activities that come with school, death of a loved one, a parents divorce or separation, and the list could go on and on.**

**It is good to have your children in activities, however a child also needs down time. If your child is complaining about their activities; they may have too much on their plate.**

**Be mindful that your kids listen to much more than you realize. You need to be careful about having adult conversations in ear shot of a child.**

**If you and your child's other parent are divorced, separated or just not getting along you should never attempt to make your child choose a side. These types of issues should never involve your child.**

**The common physical symptoms of a stressed child include: mood swings, acting out, changes in sleep patterns, bedwetting, trouble concentrating, wanting to be alone, stomachaches and headaches.**

**Younger children may begin thumb sucking for example. Older children may lie, bully or defy authority. The child may overreact to even minor issues, have nightmares, become clingy or show a decline in the grades.**

**Let's look at some things we can do to decrease our child's stress level:**

- 1. Examine the cause of the stress you have in your child's life. Is it something you can control? Keep a journal of when they seem stressed and review it after a week or so to see when they appear the most stressed.**
- 2. Time management and setting realistic goals and priorities. They cannot be all things for all people. Realizing this is a huge step in the right direction. It helps to have a daily planner and be able to know what things have to be done vs. the things that can wait.**
- 3. Make sure they get enough physical activity. This releases some of that built up stress.**
- 4. Have a set bedtime schedule to ensure they get plenty of rest. Sometimes we forget how important sleep is to our bodies.**
- 5. Prepare well balanced meals. Limit their caffeine intake as caffeine is a stimulant.**
- 6. If your child wants to talk to you about how they are feeling be there for them. However, don't force them to talk.**
- 7. Make time for your child every day; express interest in your child.**
- 8. Speak with your child's teacher, if needed.**
- 9. See/talk to your health care provider if you feel that your child's stress is completely out of control.**

**This article was researched at Kids Health.org.**