



Children's Services Department
United Counties of
Leeds & Grenville



Ontario
 Early Years

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Newsletter

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Kids have stress, too!

Adults aren't the only ones who feel stressed. Kids do too, but it often goes unrecognized. Some stress is normal. It is an everyday occurrence ... a part of everyday life. It helps to motivate both children and adults, and adds spice or challenge to life. It is necessary to feel alert and energized to function at a high level. However, too much stress can be counter-productive and overwhelming. It can interfere with our ability to do normal tasks and, over time, can cause health problems. Then, it may even be unhealthy for children – and adults!

“Stress is the wear and tear on our bodies that is produced by the very process of living” (The Hurried Child by David Elkind, 1981). Elkind also says that one of the greatest contributors to stress in children's lives is hurry – to get ready, to go from one place to another, to do well and to grow up. Today the pace of life is faster and changes occur rapidly and frequently. Family upheavals due to death of a loved one or family pet, divorce, family health problems, tension, academic pressures and quarreling in the home lead to fear, anxiety and emotional overload, and contribute to chronic stress. Children often experience stress from ongoing situations, some of which may be beyond their control. (Taken from 'Stress in Children' resource sheet, Canadian Child Care Federation. www.cccf-fcsge.ca.)

The Children's Services Department of the United Counties of Leeds & Grenville is committed to responding to the needs of parents, caregivers and young children, in partnership with the community, to encourage healthy child development and positive outcomes for all.



I may be experiencing stress when I:

- ✦ have a rapid heart beat
- ✦ have sweaty palms
- ✦ have fast breathing
- ✦ have a headache
- ✦ have an upset stomach
- ✦ have nightmares
- ✦ have clenched jaw/
grinding teeth
- ✦ have poor self image
- ✦ am overly sensitive
- ✦ cry excessively
- ✦ am unusually clingy
- ✦ have a change in eating habits
- ✦ have unusual temper tantrums
- ✦ self-mutilate
- ✦ abuse substances
- ✦ have tight muscles
- ✦ am feeling unusually nervous
- ✦ regress



Learn to recognize in yourself and to teach your children to recognize the symptoms of stress and the changes they feel in themselves when they are upset.

There are ways that you can help.

- ✦ If you think your kids are feeling stressed – ask them.
 - ✦ First they will need to calm down so that they can think more clearly. Taking a few deep breaths will help them to relax.
 - ✦ Ask them how they feel and why they think they feel that way.
 - ✦ Next, ask them how big the problem is (label it 1-2-3-4-5). Listen carefully to what they have to say.
- Help them choose what to do next. Later you can ask if it helped.

Stress-management strategies help children and adults to:

- ✦ Gain a sense of control. When you realize that you have choices, especially in difficult situations, you feel less helpless.
- ✦ Learn how to relax. When you learn ways to relax, you realize that you can help yourself feel better by becoming less tense or upset.
- ✦ Develop a “can-do” attitude. You can begin to focus on what you can do in a situation rather than on what you cannot do.

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- ✦ **Simple ways to create a less stressful home:**
 - ✦ Make sure you get exercise everyday. Go out and play soccer ... kick a ball, run, swim, or walk.
 - ✦ Children should have time to play.
 - ✦ Healthy food and balanced meals can help the body cope with stress more easily.
 - ✦ Spend time with your family members regularly and ask them how they feel.
 - ✦ Hugs, kisses and other signs of affection show kids and significant others that you love them and make them feel good.
 - ✦ Bedtime routines help kids relax at the end of the day.
 - ✦ Sleep is important.
 - ✦ Morning routines and organization get the day off to a good start.
 - ✦ Have fun together. A good laugh helps fight off stress.
 - ✦ Learn to manage your stress positively and productively.
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People who are able to deal with stress are healthier, happier and do better at home, school and work.

Stop! Look! Listen! – Creative Ways To Communicate

It's important to know what bothers and upsets you as an adult. It is just as important to know what upsets your children. Take time for each person in your family everyday. Don't wait until you think they are stressed. Ask them, when things are calm, what they worry about. Look them straight in the eyes. The eyes are the windows of the soul. You know these special people very well ... you will know if they are upset or worried. Then listen very carefully. Try not to finish their sentences or interrupt. Stop, look and listen!



By making play possible in the lives of children, we help them grow up into healthier and happier young adults. “Making Play Possible” can help make recreational opportunities possible for children who might not easily have access to those kinds of opportunities. If your child, or a child you know might benefit, please help them get in touch with the project by calling 613-498-4844 or 1-800-809-2494 (toll free) and ask to speak to the “Making Play Possible” Co-ordinator.

Fun Recipes for Art

Just like the REAL Playdough

- ★ 1 cup flour
- ★ 1 cup water
- ★ 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- ★ 1 tbsp powdered alum
- ★ 1/2 cup salt
- ★ 2 tbsp vanilla or other flavouring (optional)
- ★ food coloring, paint or Koolaid (for colour)



★ In a saucepan, mix all dry ingredients. Add oil and water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until reaching the consistency of mashed potatoes. Remove from heat and add vanilla (or other flavouring) and food coloring (paint or Koolaid). Mix well. Divide into balls and work in color by kneading. Store the dough in the refrigerator in an airtight container.

★ *Check out other fun craft recipes ... Just Kids Recipes is located at www.justkidsrecipes.com.*

Helpful Websites Regarding Stress and Family Life:

- ★ ♦ www.kidshavestressstoo.org
- ★ ♦ www.kidshealth.org
- ★ ♦ www.stress-and-health.com
- ★ ♦ www.mindtools.com
- ★ ♦ www.stress.org
- ★ ♦ www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus Then do a search for “stress”.
- ★ ♦ www.cfc-efc.ca/docs/cccf/rs019_en.htm



★ ALSO:

★ “Don’t Pop Your Cork on Mondays” (The Children’s Anti-Stress Book), Author:
★ Adolph Moser, Ed. D.

OEYC Participant On-Line Survey — April 2 - 27, 2007
Complete a survey and Enter your Name to win a PRIZE!!!
Watch for more details at your local OEYC

OEYC Leeds & Grenville Site Schedule Jan.—Mar. 2007