

# Managing Stress As a Parent



**Parenting is a rewarding but stressful job.** Problems at work or with other relationships can make your stress load feel unbearable at times. If tension becomes chronic it may lead to headaches, fitful sleep, irritability, poor concentration and other health problems.

Ignored symptoms will not disappear. When you take care of yourself, you can take better care of your family. How you deal with high levels of stress teaches your children how to cope with it, too. Are you modeling good behavior? If you find yourself snapping or exploding in anger at your children, consider these actions to reduce stress and help you unwind:

- ▶ Avoid drinking excessive alcohol and caffeine.
- ▶ Exercise to reduce tension and protect your health.
- ▶ Ask for help from family and friends or others in your support network.
- ▶ Get enough sleep. See your doctor if you have difficulty sleeping.
- ▶ Forgive. Holding a grudge benefits no one.
- ▶ Do something nice for others.
- ▶ Appreciate what you have. Focus on gratitude.
- ▶ Arrive at appointments early.
- ▶ Make time to do something that brings you joy each day, whether it's a hobby, listening to music or watching a favorite TV show.

**Alleviating stress in healthy ways allows you  
to be a better parent.**



2014 Virginia Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention

No permission is needed to duplicate this page for educational purposes.

1-800-552-7096 Virginia Child Abuse Hotline (language line available)

800-Children (800-244-5373) Parent Helpline