



Prevent Child Abuse Indiana

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Stress management

How to handle your toughest job



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Let's face it—parenting is the toughest job in the world. How many people do you know who would answer the following want ad?

HELP WANTED

Seeking Quality Parent: Role for male or female to work double or triple shifts. No weekends or holidays off. Requires long-term commitment (18 years minimum), and unlimited physical, emotional stamina. Low pay to start but great potential for high satisfaction.

As with everything you want to do well, parenting requires learning ways to do the job effectively. Try some of these ideas for managing stress in order to make the most of your potential as a parent.

- Take deep breaths, go for a walk, or close your eyes and imagine yourself relaxing on a beautiful beach with warm sun and a soft breeze—simply remove yourself from the situation. Taking a brief mental vacation can be just the ticket to face the stress with a new perspective.
- Draw strength from family and friends. Call on people who make you feel good about yourself, feel hopeful, or feel loved. Try to avoid people who make you feel angry or sad—anger makes stress worse.

- Keep yourself strong. Eat a balanced diet, get regular exercise and concentrate on your physical well-being. This may mean relying on family or friends for childcare—but it is important to keep your body up to the challenge of parenting.
- Make a list of things you love to do. Pick a few items and find time for them. Ask family and friends to help you. Adding things you love to your life is a wonderful way to relieve stress.

Be flexible enough to admit that you are not perfect. All people fall behind schedule sometimes. So, know that there will be times when something falls through the cracks. That's life—go with the flow.

- Anticipate problems and solve them. If your toddler loves to play with the stereo, and that bothers you, then move the stereo. Replace it with interesting and safe toys. By creating a special play area for your child, you prevent the troubles that drive you crazy.
- Talk with a counselor or a trusted advisor about your stress. Sometimes it helps just to get things off your chest.

Stress-free parenting is a myth—but you can find ways to make your days less stressful so that you can do a more effective job of parenting.

For more information about this and other parenting concerns, call 1.800.CHILDREN (1.800.244.5373), Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.