

Children react to stress in different ways based on their age, developmental stage and reason for the stress.

School-related stress

School can be a stressful experience for children

Experiencing a certain amount of 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 Some children react by changing behaviors, perhaps becoming withdrawn or acting out aggressively. Others may regress to behaviors they have grown out of, such as thumb sucking. Stress also can cause headaches, stomachaches and sleep problems.

You can't remove all 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 rituals and routines. A set schedule provides children with a sense of comfort and security.
- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest, and provide nutritious meals to help your child's brain function 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 over commit your child with too many extracurricular activities, but provide opportunities for nonschool-related activities that allow him or her to be in a social setting, 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 downtime for your child. Allow time in your child's schedule when he or she does not have to do anything or be anywhere.
- Pay attention to your child's verbal and nonverbal cues that things are getting overwhelming.
- Communicate with your child's teachers or caregivers and discuss possible 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.