

Parenting Tips
Trempealeau County Promoting Safe and Stable Families
By
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Childhood is NOT Free of Stress

Have you found yourself thinking, ‘If only I were a kid again without the stressors of adult responsibilities?’ But when most of us recall our youth, we can also remember the fear of rejection, pressure to join an “in group,” teasing, and demands from parents and teachers that caused us plenty of mental anguish. The causes of childhood stress persist today.

Anxieties run high as parents worry about their child’s grades, performance on sports teams, class rank, college and career possibilities, and involvement in the “right” organizations.

The following list includes ways to minimize the stress imposed by parental expectations and demands:

- Allow your child to express his own thoughts and feelings. Avoid judging what you hear.
- Be aware when you are imposing your own needs on your child.
- Listen to your children when they are expressing dreams or goals. Do not squash their dreams. If the goal seems unattainable, you might reply with, “That’s sounds pretty exciting. Tell me more about what you think that would be like.”
- Allow your child to make mistakes and learn from the experience. Avoid remarks such as, “I could have told you this would happen.” Instead say, “Tell me what you learned from this.”
- Set limits on acceptable behavior, but allow some freedom within those limits.
- Make an effort to expose your child to careers that may be of interest to him/her.
- Provide your child with tasks that allow your child to contribute to the family and community. Successful completion builds confidence within the child.
- Share your experiences from the past. Allowing your child to see that there were times you struggled, assures your child that he/she isn’t the only one who encounters difficult times.
- Accept failure as a part of exploration. The old adage is “It’s better to have tried and failed than to have never tried at all.”
- DO NOT feel personally rejected if your child chooses not to follow your tips.
- Be alert to symptoms of stress in your child and immediately address them. EXAMPLE: “I have noticed that you have been rather sad/anxious for the last few days. I’d like to be there for you. Let me know when we can talk.” If the situation does not improve, you may want to contact a medical or mental health professional, school psychologist, or family service agency.

A limited number of brochures entitled “Understanding Childhood Stress” are available upon a first come first served basis. Contact Cyndy Jacoby, Trempealeau County UW-Extension Family Living Program, PO BOX 67, Whitehall, WI 54773. Phone: 715 - 538-2311, Ext. 209 or toll free 1-877-538-2311, Ext. 209. Email: cindy.jacoby@ces.uwex.edu



Family Living Program

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