

## Ways to decrease the stresses of parenting

**Establish routines** – When children know what comes next they are more cooperative.

**Develop simple family rules** – Children as young as two years old can help to clear the table.

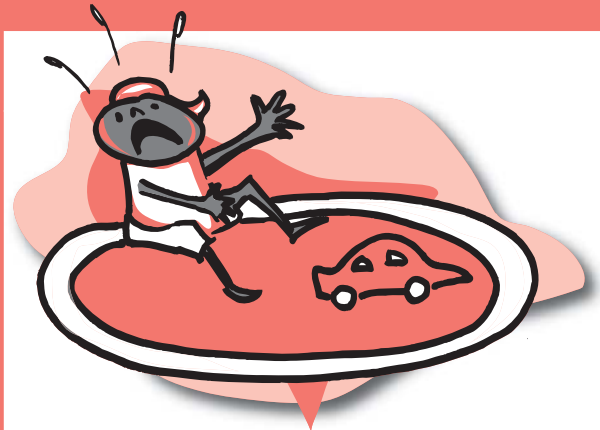
**Set limits** – Set limits that are fair and clear so that children know what is expected.

**Be consistent** – Children need to know that you mean what you say. Say only what you are willing to enforce.

**Give choices** – Allow children to feel in control of their lives by letting them make choices within the boundaries that you set.

**Take time to learn how your children develop** – The more you learn about what to expect from your children at different ages and stages, the better prepared you will be.

**Know your children's friends and their parents** – Get to know your child's friends. Invite their parents to your home or spend a few minutes on the phone with them.



*When my kids become wild and unruly,  
I use a nice, safe playpen.  
When they're finished, I climb out.*

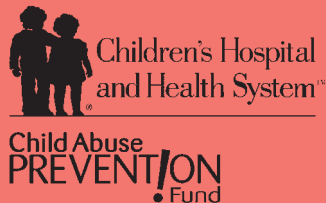
- Erma Bombeck

For Assistance and Information  
Call Our

**PARENT HELPLINE**  
**(414) 671-0566**

[www.theparentingnetwork.org](http://www.theparentingnetwork.org)

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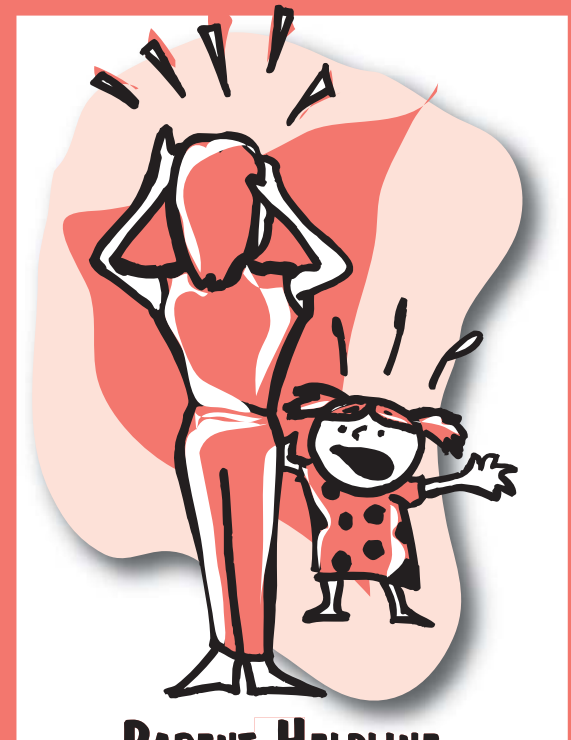


Artwork by Michael Owen Design (and his son, Brandon)



**THE PARENTING NETWORK**

## PARENTING AND MANAGING STRESS



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**(414) 671-0566**

## Signs of Stress

When the demands of life and parenting seem overwhelming, stress develops. Some signs of stress include:

- Yelling and screaming at the children
- Recurrent tiredness during the day
- Frequent tension in the body
- Feeling “on edge”
- “Tuning out” family and others repeatedly
- Feeling the “weight of the world” on your shoulders
- Increased need for outside stimulation to feel good (coffee, food, sex, TV, alcohol, money)
- Loss of appetite and/or difficulty sleeping

**When the daily stress of parenting increases, the joy of parenting decreases. While it is not possible to have a stress-free life, too much stress is harmful to your health.**



## Managing Parenting Stress

Everyone manages stress in his/her own way. Recognizing stress in your body is the first step in taking action toward self-care.

- Pay attention to how you feel and where your tension is present (especially in your neck, face, shoulders, back, chest and stomach).
- Breathe deeply and gently stretch and relax any tense areas.
- **These stress reduction tips may help:**

*Walk, work and eat at a relaxed pace.*

*Listen to music - even sing along!*

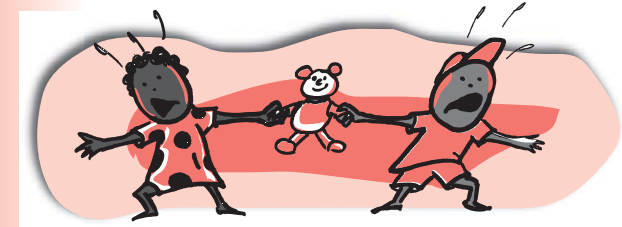
*If possible, go outside at least once a day and notice the simple things such as the wind and sounds of nature.*

*Count to 10..20..30 (and backwards if necessary!)*

*Phone a friend.*

*Eat nutritious meals. Cut down on caffeine (coffee, tea, cola, chocolate.)*

*Find humor in the behavior of your children and other people. Laughter is a powerful stress reliever.*



*Exercise and get adequate sleep.*

*Add something beautiful to your life on a daily basis (flowers, music, photos).*

*Avoid holding in your feelings. Find a safe place to feel and express them. Writing in a journal can be helpful.*

*Join a parenting class or a parent support group or call the **Parent Helpline at (414) 671-0566.***

- **Organize & simplify your life!**

*Prioritize—do what is most important first and let some things wait until later.*

*Organize and unclutter your home so that you know where things are.*

*Prepare for the morning the night before (lunches, clothes, homework, permission slips.)*

*Allow extra time to get the kids ready.*

*Dot down notes to help your memory.*