



STRESS AND KIDS

Some stress is normal. It is something everyone has to deal with and it helps children develop coping skills. Stress becomes a problem when it prevents daily activities or routines.

As a parent, keep in mind that when you are feeling stress and anxiety those feelings transfer to your children very easily. Remembering this may enable you to feel empathy for your child and may help you to relax.

Signs of Stress

Three Stages of Stress:

1. Alarm: Increased breathing rate, racing heart, mind is racing
2. Resistance: Body attempts to slow down but is unable to stabilize. (i.e.: unable to fall asleep)
3. Exhaustion: Feel tired but try to refocus.

Three types of Stress

4. Physical: Headaches, nausea, sweaty palms, heart palpitations, dizziness, stomach-aches, diarrhea, bedwetting/soiling
5. Behavioral: Daydreaming, nervousness, poor concentration, hair pulling, biting fingernails, compulsivity, sleep problems, nightmares, ear tugging, fighting, cruelty to animals and/or peers
6. Emotional: Sadness, worry, fear, confusion, depression, anxiety, irritability, anger, withdrawal from usual activities

Major Sources of Stress

Home: Relationship with parents, relationship between parents, new sibling, sibling rivalry, blended family, moving, finances, unemployment, chronic illness, death of relative or pet, over scheduling (Your own stress level impacts your child's stress level)

School: Being at a new school, refusing to go, relationship with teacher, fitting in with peers, homework, tests, competition, failing grades

Peers: Having friends, peer pressure, relationship with opposite sex, sports/extracurricular activities (push for perfection from parents)

Environment: Television, current events, neighborhood situations, gangs, violence

Benefits of Stress

- Gives a child a sense of victory or accomplishment
- Raises child's confidence in themselves
- Raises level of competence
- Child acquires coping strategies
- Child realizes that they are not alone, everyone deals with stress.
- Child becomes stronger and is able to face challenges
- Child becomes independent and self reliant