

[IMAGE]

The Low-Stress Child: Tips to Keep Your Children From Feeling the Heat

By Editorial Staff

When you feel stressed, how do you react? You've probably developed a long list of stress-reduction strategies to help you through even the toughest day. And yet sometimes, we bet that's still not enough.

Now imagine you're a child, without the benefit of those stress-reducing strategies, and often without the experience and mental maturity to know what stress even means - much less how to deal with it. If you think about it, children have a considerable number of potential daily stressors. Here are some tips to help nurture a low-stress child who can stay cool even when things heat up:

- *Scenario #1:* Your child says they've got "tons" of homework to do and don't even know where to start. There's "no way" they'll get it done in time, and they're sure they're going to fail out of every class. *The solution:* Teach your child, whatever their age, to break the workload into manageable segments - either by responsibility or time. Have them write down all their assignments on a whiteboard or piece of paper, along with the approximate time they think it will take to complete each task. Schedule a 10-minute break after every completed assignment - or after 30 minutes or so, if a given task requires more than a half-hour. As they cross off each item and then relax while preparing for the next, the stress will start to melt away.
- *Scenario #2:* Your child feels as if their life is a revolving wheel of responsibilities, but with no time for "fun." Between soccer practices and advanced classwork, they feel like a proverbial hamster, running an endless wheel with no time to take a break. *The solution:* Find the "holes" in life's calendar and schedule events that your child can look forward to with family, friends or just alone (depending on their age). If you think about it, stress is at its worst when we don't feel as if there's any end in sight; simply knowing there's a play date, a trip to an amusement park or a family vacation on the horizon can motivate you to get to that "big day" without destroying yourself in the process.
low-stress child - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark
- *Scenario #3:* The fatigue factor plays a massive role in stress. When we're tired, we're less patient, more demanding and more prone to stress. Why? Because we don't have the energy to stay focused.

The solution: Children need plenty of sleep - more than you probably think, and more than many adults can handle. In fact, sleep plays such an important role in health / stress that school starting times have become a big topic of discussion. With more reasons to stay up later, children just aren't getting the sleep they need – which translates into more stress throughout the day. The good-old "bedtime" has a purpose: it ensures your child gets enough sleep. Oh, and by the way, getting your kids off to bed benefits parents, too; after all, a little quality time without your children in your ear can do wonders for *your* stress levels, too.

Stress is an unfortunate reality of life, but it also provides us with the chance to learn and grow by dealing with it productively. Teach your children to handle stress the right way; in the process, you might learn a thing or two to help lower your stress, too. Talk to your doctor for more information.

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