



Tips for Parents: Managing Big Stressors With Little Ones in the House

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ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime



You are the most important person in your child's life. You are the one that helps her feel safe. When you are worried or sad, she knows it. Taking care of yourself is one of the most important ways you take good care of your child.

Feelings you may have during stressful times:

- Trouble sleeping. You might wake up in the night or have nightmares.
- Eating changes. You may not be hungry. Or maybe you are eating everything in sight.
- Getting upset easily; lose your temper; cry a lot.
- Can't stop thinking about what's causing you stress or concern.
- Afraid and worried about what is going to happen to you and your family.
- No energy to do anything, even though there is so much to do.
- You have little control over your life.
- Hopeless about future.

These feelings are normal and, in many cases, rational responses to stressful situations. It is *how* you handle these feelings that makes the difference for you, and your child.



Here are some ideas for taking care of yourself even when you're at your most stressed:

- **Stay connected.** Talk to people you trust. Share your feelings, fears and concerns. Keeping these strong feelings inside can make them grow and add to your stress.
- **If possible, find ways to get some exercise alone and with your child.** This can be a great way to reduce stress.
- **Take a break in whatever way you can.** Take a walk, read—do something that soothes and satisfies you.
- **Find ways to have fun with your child.** Activities like singing and reading books together can relieve stress for both parent and child!
- **Establish a daily routine as best you can.** Consistency and routines help adults and children feel safe and secure.
- **Try mindfulness techniques.** Note the feelings that come up for you but try not to get stuck on negative thoughts. Think about what you can do with your feelings that could be productive.
- **Ask for support!** Consider talking to a trusted health professional or seeking other professional help if you have further questions or need more support.

Check out [this resource](#) on managing emotions during stressful times.

*We've got expertise on child development. You're the expert on your child.
We're in this together.*

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