

## Makeover Your Child's Reaction to Stress

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**MAKEOVER** your child's reaction to stress; the benefits will last a lifetime!

*"Modern over stimulation rocks the children of our nation.  
Too much, too soon, too loud, too quick—the din is making our kids sick.  
But rested bodies and relaxed minds can be attained in modern times.  
And though the din won't go away, we can help kids thrive today." (P Teel)*

Many, if not most of our children's problems come from their inability to deal with stress in a healthy way. But a child is unlikely to know when he or she is overstressed and it's up to the parents to watch for tell-tale signs which may include: difficulties with sleep, health, mood, and learning.

*Physical symptoms of stress or anxiety in children may include:* recurring headaches, stomach pain and nausea, sleep disturbances, nightmares, bedwetting, decreased appetite, and stuttering.

*Emotional symptoms of stress or anxiety in children may include:* moodiness, difficulty with concentration (spaciness), scary thoughts, a tendency to worry a lot, low self-esteem, restlessness, clinging, aggression, stubbornness, not wanting to participate in family or school activities, being easily upset: crying, whining, or excessive anger.

If parents suspect that their child is over-stressed or anxious, they would be wise to simplify their child's life by cutting back on extra curricular activities and creating a home environment that is a sanctuary from the outside world. Each child is unique and even in the same family the number of activities that could be overwhelming for one child, might be quite comfortable for another.

However, it's never possible to eliminate stress completely and we cannot (and should not) protect our children from every difficult experience. We can though, help our children to recognize and face their anxious feelings and react to them in a healthy way.

### Ways to Help Kids De-Stress

#### Teach them to relax.

- Practice the 3 R's: teach kids to *rest* their bodies, *relax* their minds, and *refresh* their spirits. Take a few minutes each day to practice self-soothing relaxation techniques such as progressive relaxation, attending to the breath, and visualization.
- Anticipate problems that are likely to occur and give your children a chance use their self-calming skills. Have a cue that quickly and privately signals a child to use his relaxation skills to become calm or to focus. It could be a word, or a physical cue.

#### Teach them to be active.

- Try to ensure that your child has at least thirty minutes of moderate-intensity exercise each day.
- Be a role model for an active lifestyle.
- Find fun, outdoor activities that you can do together as a family.
- Do slow sustained stretches in the evening before bed.

## TIME OUT WITH PATTI TEEL

DREAM THE DREAM AND STEP INTO IT

### Teach them to turn it off.

- Limit television and video viewing time, as well as time spent playing video or computer games.
- Monitor TV shows, avoiding violent shows, those that are fast paced, and material that is inappropriate for your child's age and level of maturity.
- Turn all electronic equipment off at least an hour before bed.

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Dubbed "The Dream Maker" by People magazine, Patti Teel is a former teacher and the creator of an award winning relaxation audio series for children. Her book, *The Floppy Sleep Game*, gives parents techniques to help their children relax, deal with stress and fall asleep. She is a popular speaker and presents innovative workshops for parents, children, and health professionals. Get R&R tips and sign up for her newsletter at [www.pattiteel.com](http://www.pattiteel.com). You can listen to her online radio show at [www.timeoutwithpattiteel.com](http://www.timeoutwithpattiteel.com).