

Fall 2024



# The Parent Line



## Identifying Stress in Children

Stress is a biological response to the demands of life and is caused by the sudden increase of chemicals and hormones throughout the body. Stress can be helpful as it activates the fight-or-flight mode, however, too much stress can lead to health problems. Everyone has experienced stress in one way or another, and children are no exception to the experience, even though their perception and experience of stress may differ from the adult's perspective. Since young children often find it difficult to express their feelings, their stress manifests through behaviors that can affect their overall health. As parents and caregivers, identifying stress in your child is crucial to helping them handle it effectively.

### Stress, from a child's viewpoint may stem from the following:

- Changes in their daily routines or lives, such as divorce, relocation, and changing schools.
- Sickneses and injuries in either the child or a close family member.
- Abandonment, loneliness, and neglect.
- Experiencing physical, verbal, or emotional abuse in the form of punishment, sexual assault, and humiliation.
- Worrying about homework/schoolwork
- Experiencing bullying
- Stress in parents – you may think you are hiding it well from your child, but their brains are wired to pick up on what's going on with you and new research shows there's more impact on children when parents are trying to suppress their stress reactions.

### To identify stress in children, parents and caregivers can look out for the signs below as these are some of the ways children indirectly express their stress:

**Emotional outbursts or increased irritability** – If your child is acting out more than usual it might be due to stress. Feelings of anger and irritability become more intense when their world changes.

**Frequent headaches or stomachaches** – Extra stress means extra hormones, which can trigger cramps, headaches and upset stomachs.

**Trouble sleeping** – Worries and fears often come out at an unexpected time—bedtime! Children who are stressed may have a hard time with staying asleep or having nightmares after they fall asleep.

**Withdrawing from others** – Sometimes we all want to get away. However, when children dramatically increase their alone time or quit interacting with friends it can be a sign of stress.

**Struggles with school** – It's natural to do better or worse in school at times, but if you notice significant changes in your child's school performance it could be due to stress.

**Increased defiance** – All kids can be stubborn, but stressed kids often act more stubborn than normal. Extra pressure in their lives causes them to feel angry and overwhelmed, which can lead to acting more defiant.

**If you have any questions regarding this topic or any other parenting topic, please contact The Parent Line at 808-526-1222 or 1-800-816-1222.**

References: American Academy of Pediatrics. (2020). Helping children handle stress. [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org/Healthy/ByTopic/HealthyLiving/DealingWithStress/Pages/Helping-Children-Handle-Stress.aspx).  
 Helping Children Handle Stress- [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org/Healthy/ByTopic/HealthyLiving/DealingWithStress/Pages/Helping-Children-Handle-Stress.aspx)  
 Bavolet, S. J. (2007). Dealing with stress. Nurturing Parenting Programs Family Development Resources, Inc.  
 Waters SE, Kamilowicz HR, West TV, Mendes WB. Keep it to yourself? Parent emotion suppression influences physiological linkage and interaction behavior. *J Fam Psychol*.



## Paper Pumpkin

Source: Easy Art Projects by Scholastic

### What you need:

- Toilet tissue tubes
- Orange crayon
- Orange, green, and brown construction papers
- Scissors
- Tape

### Instructions:

1. Using the orange crayon, color the toilet tissue tube
2. Fold orange construction paper into 10 strips and cut 10 strips and cut them out
3. Tape one end of the strip inside one end of the tube
4. Tape the other end of the strip inside the other end of the tube
5. Do the same with all 10 strips
6. Cut out a leaf and a stem from the brown and green construction papers
7. Tape the brown stem inside the top of the tube, and attach the leaf with the tape

## Suggested Activity



## Special Days to Remember

### September is National Service Dog Month

- 9/2 - Labor Day
- 9/5 - International Day of Charity
- 9/8 - International Literacy Day
- 9/21 - International Day of Peace



### October is Safe Sleep Awareness/National Bullying Prevention Month

- 10/5 - World's Teacher's Day
- 10/13 - International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction
- 10/26 - National Pumpkin
- 10/31 - Halloween



### November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month



- 11/5 - Election Day
- 11/11 - Veteran's Day
- 11/20 - Universal Children's Day
- 11/25 - International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
- 11/28 - Thanksgiving Day

## Suggested Readings



*In the Middle of Fall*

By: Kevin Henkes

*Catside Up, Catside Down*

By: Anna Hrachovec

*Cranky*

By: Phuc Tran

List compiled by the staff of Edna Allyn Room for Children at the Hawai'i State Library. Mahalo!

## Spotlight on Safety

### Pedestrian Safety

With young children exploring autonomy and independence, parents and caregivers are encouraged to teach and model safe street crossing. Parents and caregivers should explain



the importance of holding a family/adult's hand when crossing the street, while teaching and modeling safe crossing.

### The following are tips on teaching children how to cross the street safely:

- Teach children to always cross the street where there is a pedestrian crossing.
- When there is no pedestrian crossing, teach children to look left, right and left again before crossing the street. Then remind them to continue looking until safely across.
- Teach kids to put phones, headphones and devices in their pocket/backpack when crossing the street. It is particularly important to reinforce this message with teenagers.
- Children under the age of 10 need to cross the street with an adult.
- Be a role model and set a good example by putting your phone, headphones and devices down when walking around cars.

## Suggested Resource



October is Safe Sleep Awareness Month; a time to encourage parents and caregivers to practice safe infant sleep. Let us remember to use the ABCs of Safe Sleep – ALONE in the crib, BACK to sleep for every sleep, and in a CRIB or basinet. We have this guide in 12 different languages that you can order and are available on The Parent Line website.

If you would like more information on Safe Sleep, please contact The Parent Line at 808-526-1222 or visit [www.theparentline.org](http://www.theparentline.org)