



THE FAMILY TREE

Some things a parent can do... to help manage stress...

- Take a break or time-out for yourself-no matter how small (even an hour helps)
- Use your extended family, if possible, to help with your child and to give yourself time
- Join a group of parents or other people who have common interests or hobbies
- Keep communication open with your spouse so that he/she can share the burdens. If the burdens are not communicated, your spouse may not recognize that there is undue stress. Don't try to be a super parent. Be the best parent you can be, but avoid burn out. You are only human. If you need help, don't be ashamed or too proud to ask for help. No one is perfect
- Avoid scheduling too many things in one day or one week; but DO schedule relaxation time, even if it is only one 20-minute period a day. Your body and mind need to calm down on a routine basis from daily pressures.
- Develop a buddy system. Find someone with whom you can share your thoughts; someone who has experienced what you have and has handled the situation well, or someone who will just lend a listening ear to help you get things off your chest. Call the Parent StressLine (410) or (800) 243-7337. Talk with a school counselor or your pastor/ rabbi, or a friend in your church/ synagogue. Explore your feelings. You are not alone in what you think or feel. Talking with others will help you know that you are not weird.
- If you are angry, accept your anger. It is a natural reaction that may last for a long time or pop up frequently. Recognize what brings it on, how you are feeling and why. You may feel victimized and hurt. Try to explore the reasons- this will help you find ways of handling these feelings. Get help if you need it. Recognize the things over which you have no control. Try to avoid feeling responsible for everything that happens.
- Examine your anger when you are feeling angry with your child. Are you angry because the child provoked you, or are you angry with yourself because of unfinished/ unresolved business within you? Recognize when you are relating things in your own life- childhood or past situations- to what your child is doing
- Make physical exercise a part of your relaxation. Do some speed walking or slow walking, jogging, jumping rope, or become active in a sport you enjoy
- Give your child enough opportunities to socialize with her friend, otherwise you may feel the pressure of being her only friend or play buddy
- Prepare your child for independence by taking small steps when she is young. Build a foundation for later independence, value judgments, and choice of actions. This will help

you know if she is prepared or not.

- Let go some of the fears of having something happen to your child. Have faith in his ability and your previous preparations in helping your child to be independent
- Recognize your level of involvement with your child and the important role you play. You may sometimes have to withdraw from involvement in order for your child to progress on his own. When your child is ready to do for himself, let your child go. If he stumbles, help- but don't do it all.