



Children and Stress



At Alameda Alliance for Health (Alliance), we are here to help you take charge of your health. Parents and caregivers can use this guide to look for signs of stress in your child and to learn how to get help.

Our children live in a world that can sometimes be stressful and confusing for them. Although it is normal for children to feel stress as their bodies and minds grow, pressure from friends, school, and family can add stress. Life events like divorce, death, and community violence affect children too.

Luckily, as adults we can do a lot to help children deal with stress in healthy ways.



LOOK FOR THESE SIGNS OF STRESS:

- Changes in eating habits, trouble sleeping
- Clinging, not willing to let you out of their sight
- Not wanting to go to school or other places they normally go
- Worry and fear, not able to relax
- Anger, crying, whining
- Complaints about aches and pains

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP CHILDREN WITH STRESS?

Provide a safe, secure home.

- Create family routines. Have a family dinner or movie night.
- Be a role model. Do your best to keep your own stress under control and manage it in healthy ways.
- Spend calm, relaxed time with your children.
- Build your child's feeling of self-worth. Use rewards instead of punishment.
- Be careful about which TV programs, books, and games young children watch, read, and play. Some can produce fear and anxiety.



Listen to your children.

- Listen to your child without judgment or trying to solve the problem right away. Instead work with your child to help them understand and solve what is making them upset.
- Allow your child to make choices. The more your child feels they have control, the better they can respond to stress.

Talk with your children.

- Assure them that you always love them. Let them know that bad things can happen sometimes and it's not their fault.
- Ask them how they are feeling. Let them know that it is OK to cry.
- Keep your child informed of changes such as in jobs or moving.

Practice healthy habits.

- Make sure your children get plenty of exercise. Get lots of fresh air.
- Provide healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, and low-fat milk.
- Teach your children how to relax. Try deep breathing or yoga.



Get help for your child.

- Seek help or advice from a doctor or counselor when signs of stress do not get better or if you notice that your child:
 - Has problems in school or with friends or family
 - Cannot control their behavior or anger
 - Seems withdrawn or depressed
- If the stress is because of school, be sure to talk to the teacher and principal.
- To find a behavioral health care provider, please call:

Alliance Member Services Department

Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm

Phone Number: **1.510.747.4567**

Toll-Free: **1.877.932.2738**

People with hearing and speaking impairments (CRS/TTY):

711/1.800.735.2929

- For parenting support, you can also call **Family Paths** toll-free at **1.800.829.3777**.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

For kids: KidsHealth Relax & Unwind Center (English, Spanish)

www.kidshealth.org/en/kids/center/relax-center.html

For teens: TeensHealth Stress & Coping Center (English, Spanish)

www.kidshealth.org/en/teens/center/stress-center.html

Do you need more support?

Please call Alliance Health Programs

Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm

Phone Number: **1.510.747.4577**

Toll-Free: **1.855.891.9169**

People with hearing and speaking impairments

(CRS/TTY): **711/1.800.735.2929**

www.alamedaalliance.org

