

S.K.I.P.

Strategies with Kids | Information for Parents

Tips on Stress



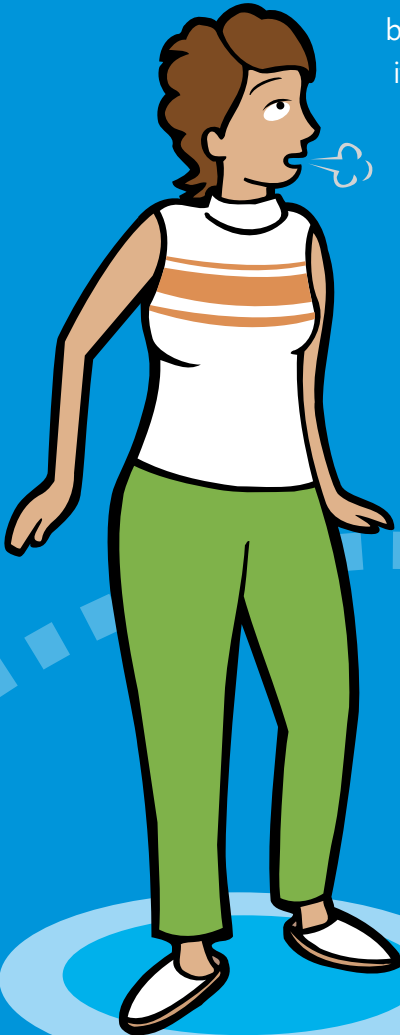
Some things are more important than others. Try to sort out what you really need to do and do other less urgent things only if you have time.

“If I’m really stressed with my baby I just sing”

Tips for parents

It's easy to get stressed as you juggle family, washing, cooking, cleaning, getting from A to B, money etc. There are times when too much stress makes life really difficult as everything seems too huge and too hard.

Stress can never be totally prevented, but there are ways it can be managed so it doesn't become overwhelming.



Set aside time for yourself, sit and read a book for 10 minutes.

“Take a break from being a mum”

Things that could help

- Think about how you react to certain situations. Are there some things that wind you up more than others? Talk about these with someone else and think of ways you can manage.
- Sometimes just accepting "I can't do anything about it, it's not my problem" is a relief.
- Set realistic expectations. If you've got small children trying to keep the house really tidy is impossible. Set aside a time at the end of the day when you all put the toys away together.
- Exercise. Try to go for a walk three times a week, do 20 sit ups every morning or dig the garden.
- Set aside some time for yourself. Sit and read a book for 10 minutes, or watch TV. Don't spend all the time when your children are asleep or busy rushing around trying to do things, use that time for yourself. Unplug the phone and take a bath, write down your feelings, mow the lawn, lie in the sun, ring a friend.

- Make friends.
Go to a support group, or join Playcentre or Kohanga Reo. Talk with parents of the children your child plays with, as this will lead to friendships that can support you.



Things that won't help

- Don't be critical of yourself, no one does everything perfectly all the time.
- Try not to be aggressive towards others, take a deep breath and walk away.
- Make sure you don't fall into the trap of not eating enough, eating too much, drinking lots of coffee or alcohol.

“If something else is going on I'll snap much more easily”

“Go outside, open a window and if you can, get into another space.”

- Yelling can just wind things up and leave you and your children feeling upset.
- Sometimes going out and about seems too hard and too exhausting. Friends and family are your best support. If you don't know anyone, think about places where you might meet other parents who are in the same position as you – Playcentre, Kohanga, kindergarten etc.
- Not getting enough sleep. Try to lie down and relax when your children are asleep. Go to bed early. Try to avoid getting so tired that everything seems too hard.

Managing your day

When children are small there always seems to be so much to do. Try to set up routines so you don't have all the chores piling up on top of each other. Be prepared to alter routines if something else comes up. Don't worry about the housework if it's a sunny day and you can go for a walk, or if someone drops in for a chat.

“Put on some really loud music and dance”

“Have a bath or shower”



Setting some goals

“I don’t answer the phone for the last 15 minutes before leaving the house”

Set priorities. Some things are more important than others, try to sort out what you really need to do and do other less urgent things when you have time. Set yourself small goals so you feel you've achieved something every day. For example you could aim to throw out everything in the fridge that is past its use-by date, or you could aim to spend time reading to your child.

If you are asked to do something that will make you stressed, say no.

“I put on a dvd for the kids”

If you're worried

If you are worried that you are feeling very stressed, low or depressed, talk with your doctor.

“I had post-natal depression. I was far away from my family and needed someone to talk to. I talked to my GP for about an hour and when I got back to the car my partner said I was a different person.”



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Skip supports parents and caregivers
to raise their children in a positive way.

For more information go to:

www.skip.org.nz

Email: **info@skip.org.nz**

or phone: **04 916 3385**

For more information on support for parents go to

www.familyservices.govt.nz

and click on Family Services Directory.



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