

TIPS FOR DE-STRESSING YOUR HOME



Pathways to
Permanence 2

Parenting
Children
Who Have
Experienced
Trauma
AND LOSS

Session 7

Parenting
the Child
with Drug
and Alcohol
Exposure

Parent's
Toolbox

It's easy for all of us to get overwhelmed and stressed. For children who have been exposed to loss, trauma, neglect, the stressors of daily life can feel even more overwhelming. Parents can assist their children by creating a home environment that is a safe haven from life's stressors.

Here are things you can do on a daily, weekly or monthly basis to de-stress your child and yourself, and enjoy parenting. Add more as you think of them, reminders never hurt!

- Make sure the family is laughing and playing together at least 30 minutes every day.
- Encourage each person to tell a joke at dinner, or take turns reading aloud in silly voices.
- Play music to set the tone – catchy upbeat tunes to get everyone going in the morning, soothing songs to wind things down in the evening.
- Acknowledge that which you value – make a point of saying something when your child shows integrity, honesty, compassion, sportsmanship, respect, or kindness.
- Simplify and focus on family time – be willing to decline social obligations.
- Unplug – limit “screen time” for everyone in the family and just be together; set ground rules for electronic devices during meals, after a certain time in the evening, etc.
- Think ahead to prevent unnecessary stressors – cook double-batches and freeze some meals; have clothes picked out the night before; go through backpacks Friday afternoon to avoid Monday morning surprises about book reports, class treats, or field trip money.
- Cultivate and nurture your support system, so that you can get much needed breaks and your child has more trusted, caring adults in his life.
- Ask for help – your best friend may not feel confident managing your child's behavior, but would be more than happy to take on the cable company to straighten out your bill.
- Practice relaxation – de-stress yourself and your family by taking walks, meditating, painting, exercising, gardening, doing yoga, petting the dog.
- Slow down – be truly present to hear what your child is saying, with her words and with her behavior.
- Get outdoors – spend time as a family at the beach, in the forest, at the lake, at your local park; go for a walk or a bike ride.
- Create “togetherness” rituals – snuggle time, comforting bedtime routines, movie night.
- Offer only acceptable choices – if you don't want the blue pants to get dirty, offer a choice between the black pants and the red ones.



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- Acknowledge that it won't all get done – put your energy toward the things that really matter.
- Make time to tell people in your life (and especially your child) how much they matter to you.

There are an infinite number of things you can do as a family to create a loving, trusting environment to help your children overcome early adversities. -