Managing Stress Guide


Caring for children can be a stressful job. There will be times when you feel like children are testing the limits or challenging you. It could feel overwhelming. In these times, it’s important to remember to take care of yourself. This guide will help you identify signs of stress and steps you can take to manage stress.

What You Might Be Seeing
Some signs that you are stressed include:
- Feeling angry or irritable a lot of the time
- Feeling hopeless
- Having trouble making decisions
- Crying easily
- Worrying all the time
- Arguing with friends or your partner
- Overeating or not eating enough
- Being unable to sleep or wanting to sleep all the time

A build-up of stress also can contribute to health problems, including allergies, a sore neck or back, headaches, upset stomach, and high blood pressure.

What You Can Do
It is important to learn how to manage your stress—for your own sake and for the children in your care. The following suggestions may help:
- Identify what’s making you stressed. Everyone’s stressors are different. Yours might be related to money, work, your surroundings (traffic, crime), your partner, children’s behavior, or health issues.
- Accept what you cannot change. Ask yourself, “Can I do anything about it?” If the answer is no, try to focus on something else. If there is something you can do, break it into smaller steps so it doesn’t feel overwhelming.
- Have faith. Look back at previous times when you have overcome challenges. Think, “This too shall pass.”
- Relax! Try deep breathing, meditation, yoga, or listening to music. Take 30 minutes to play a game or laugh with the kids in your program.
- Take care of your health. Getting enough sleep can make a big difference in your stress level. So can eating healthy foods and getting some exercise. Beginning your day rested and relaxed can help you have the patience you need throughout the day.
- Take time for yourself. Create some down time and take a bath, read a book, or pick up a hobby.
- Develop a support network. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Your training and curriculum specialist will listen to you and help you get the help you need at work.