



HELLO PARENTS,

Stress is our body's response to emotional or physical tension. It can result from any event or thought that makes us feel excited, tense, frustrated, angry, or nervous. Small doses of stress help us stay focused, energetic and alert, but prolonged stress can cause physical and emotional issues. Children experience stress just like adults. Sources of stress may include a problem at school, a conflict with a friend, or changes in the family. Learning to recognize, understand, express and manage stress will benefit children's mental health and well-being. In this newsletter, we provide activities that can help your child learn healthy ways to cope with stress.

ACTIVITIES

INFANTS (3 -18 MONTHS)

A GOODBYE RITUAL

DIRECTIONS:

- When you are leaving, tell your child, "I am going to work now. I will be back later."
- If your child cries during separation time, narrate their feelings and help them transition. You can say, "You are sad because I am leaving. I will be back soon."
- Have a goodbye ritual, such as singing a special goodbye song; giving your child something of yours to hold; or letting them hold their favourite toy. This will help your child learn to say goodbye and reduce their anxiety during separation.

[Click here](#) to listen to the song "Goodbye, Goodbye".

TODDLERS (19 MONTHS – 2.5 YEARS)

LET'S STOMP

MATERIALS:

- 3 mats (red, yellow, and green).
If you do not have mats, you can use coloured paper instead.

DIRECTIONS:

- Place the three mats in a designated area.
- Explain to your child that if they feel upset, they can stomp on the mats.
- Your child may stomp hard and fast on the red mat if they are very upset.
- Your child may stomp gently and slowly on the yellow mat if they are a bit upset.
- When your child is feeling calm, they may move to the green mat.

[Click here](#) to learn "Signs and Solutions of Toddler Stress".

PRESCHOOLERS (2.5 – 5 YEARS)

TAKE A DEEP BREATH

MATERIALS:

- A teddy bear or any stuffed toys.

DIRECTIONS:

- Have your child put one hand on their belly and another on their chest.
- Practice breathing to feel their belly move, not their chest.
- Breathe in to feel their stomach moving out.
- Breathe out to feel their stomach moving in.
- If you want this game to be more fun, let your child lie down with a teddy bear on their stomach and feel it moving up and down when they breathe in and out.

[Click here](#) to read "My Magic Breath" by Nick Oriner and Alison Taylor.

JK/SK (4 – 6 YEARS)

LEMON SQUEEZE

DIRECTIONS:

- If your child feels stressful, find a quiet space away from distractions.
- Let your child close their eyes. Using their imagination, pretend to reach up to a tree and pick a lemon with each hand.
- Squeeze the lemons hard to get all the juice out - squeeze, squeeze, squeeze.
- Throw the lemons on the floor and relax hands.
- Then repeat, until there is enough "juice" for a glass of lemonade.
- After the last lemon is squeezed, have your child shake out their hands to relax.
- This exercise can help your child release muscle tension and reduce stress in a fun way.

[Click here](#) for a lemonade recipe.

[Click here](#) to read "Ruby Finds A Worry" by Tom Rercival.

SCHOOL-AGERS (6 – 12 YEARS)

EMOTION CHARADES

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Scissors
- Pen

DIRECTIONS:

- Play this game with your friends or family members.
- Cut paper into smaller pieces.
- Think of words that can be used to describe feelings and emotions, and write them down on each piece of paper.
- Let one player choose an emotion word and act it out using their body.
- The rest of the players guess what feeling was acted out.
- Invite players to share a story about the feeling that was acted out. What was their experience? How did they feel? Did it upset them? Discuss it and find solutions together.
- You can use these questions to springboard meaningful interactions:
 - How does it feel when you see a friend with a mad face?
 - What can you do when you see a person who is sad? How is it different if they are a stranger or if they are a friend?
 - Brainstorm some ways that you can use to make yourself feel happy.

[Click here](#) to find more calm-down ideas.

[Click here](#) to learn how to relax.



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

A TIP FOR TODAY

- Practice relaxation exercises with your child every day.
- Encourage your child to express and label their emotions.
- Read books which can help your child identify with characters in stressful situations and learn how they cope with them.
- Take time to eat dinner together, play a board game, go for a walk, or have a movie night. This will help your child release stress and enjoy each other's company.
- Give your child opportunities to make choices.