

School Stressors by Grade

Kindergarten

- Fear of abandonment
- Toileting concerns
- Fear of punishment by teacher

First Grade

- Fear of riding the bus
- Toileting mishaps
- Teacher disapproval
- Ridicule by other students
- First report card
- Not going on to second grade

Second Grade

- Missing a parent or sharing him or her with a sibling
- Fear of not being able to understand
- Not being asked to help the teacher
- Being disciplined
- Being different in dress or appearance

Third Grade

- Fear of being chosen last on a team
- Parent conference
- Peer or teacher disapproval
- Tests
- Not having enough time to complete assignments
- Staying after school
-

Fourth Grade

- Fear of being chosen last
- Peer disapproval of clothing or appearance
- Friends not choosing them to share secrets
- Student ridicule
- Not being liked by teacher

Fifth Grade

- Fear of being chosen last, losing a best friend
- Not being able to complete work
- Peer disapproval
- Not being in sixth grade next year

Sixth Grade

- Fear of being chosen last
- Sexuality
- Not going on to junior high
- Peer disapproval of appearance
- Being unpopular (Youngs, 1989)

Early Childhood Stressors

Expected Stressors:

- Birth of a sibling
- Moving into own room
- Going to the dentist
- Getting a haircut
- Moving from home or preschool to school
- Friendships and relationships with adults
- Attending a birthday party
- Staying overnight
- Participating in a competition
- Going on a holiday

Unexpected stressors:

- Acquiring a step sibling, a new pet
- Separation of parents
- Moving houses
- Death of a pet
- Going to the hospital
- Feeling sick
- Feeling isolated or different
- Fears
- Unrealistic expectations
- Domestic violence abuse¹

¹ Exploring Early Childhood (2000). Board of Studies NSW. Sydney, Australia

Child Care Environments and Stress

How does my environment provide predictability?

How does my environment provide controllability?

Program Environments	
Environmental Stressors	Stress Reducing Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allergens • Noise • Visual overstimulation • Disconnected caregivers • Too much activity • Lack of variety • Academic pressure • Mandatory homework • Lack of choice • Poor furniture layout • Lack of cultural diversity • Lack of casual space • Lack of differentiation from school atmosphere • Rigid daily schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet Places • Comfy furniture • Friendly Staff • Playful Environment • Healthy snack choices • Optional homework assistance • Consistent but flexible daily schedule • Variety of rooms: outside, gym, baseroom etc. • Live objects: plants, fish, etc. • Quiet music • Cultural diversity • Age appropriate materials • Multi-age choices

Manifestations of Stress

Common Physical Manifestations

Headache	Eye strain, blurred vision
Burning in the upper abdomen	Chest pain
Lower back pain	Shortness of breath
Knots in the shoulder	Reddening of the skin of face (blushing)
Hives, skin rash	Diarrhea, constipation
Fatigue	Recurring colds
Tightness in the back of the neck	Stomachache

Common Emotions and Behaviors

Anger	Anxiety
Boredom	Depression
Fear	Feeling bothered
Forgetfulness	Frustration
Feeling hurried	Indecisiveness
Irritability	Inability to concentrate
Nervous laughter	Lack of motivation
Nail biting	Loss of appetite
Overeating	Nervousness
Poor attention span	Being overly critical
Teeth grinding	Crying
Withdrawal	Feeling upset

Signs and Symptoms of Stress

Cardiovascular	Emotional	Gastrointestinal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pounding of the heart • Racing of the heart • Cold, sweaty hands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nervousness • Unexplained Fearfulness • Frustration • Lack of direction • Cynicism • Anxiety • Impulsive behavior • Depression • Irritability • Forgetfulness • Sever mood swings • Tearfulness • Urge to hide • Difficulty finishing tasks • Changes in eating • Boredom • Apathy • Low self-esteem • Sudden bursts of anger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dryness of mouth/throat • Difficulty swallowing • Grinding of teeth • Indigestion • Vomiting • Loss of appetite • Excessive appetite • Diarrhea or constipation • Abdominal pain • Increased cravings • Frequent urination
Mental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion • Negative thinking • Lethargy 		
Respiratory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortness of breath • Rapid breathing • Asthma attacks 		
Sleep Disorders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accidents • Insomnia • Nightmares 		
Skin Problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive dryness • Rashes • Excessive perspiration 		
		Relational <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation • Nagging • Loss of friends • Intolerance • Resentment • Distrust • Loneliness

101 Stress Relievers

Need a quick—or not so quick—stress-break? Fresh out of ideas? Try one of these:

ANGRY? TALK TO A FRIEND ABOUT IT.

Apologize for a mistake. **Meditate.** Stand up and stretch.

Ask for help.

Call up an old friend.

Change coffee break to exercise break.

Stop and look out the window.

Work a crossword puzzle.

Dance

CLIMB A MOUNTAIN.

Close your eyes. What do you see?

Count to ten—or 1000—before exploding. Count your blessings—make a list.

Cut back on caffeine.

WATCH A REALLY GOOD MOVIE.

Plan ahead.

Eat an orange slowly, segment by segment.

Eat a good breakfast.

DAYDREAM spend your coffee break at the beach.

Do one thing at a time.

Forgive someone.

Fly a kite.

Get a massage. Get a pet.

Find someone you're grateful to and thank them.

Play with your dog.

Get a good night's sleep.

Get up fifteen minutes early.

Keep a journal of thoughts and feelings.

GO

for a brisk walk. swimming.

to work a different way.

Go fishing.



Hug a tree.

Hug someone you love.

Laugh at something you did.

Leave the car at home and take the bus.

Lie in a hammock.



Lift weights.

Listen to the birds.

Make love.

LOOK

at the big picture. closely at a flower, leaf, blade of grass or tree trunk. off into the distance.

Read a good book.

WASH THE CAR.

Plant a flower.



Smell a rose.

READ SOMETHING FUNNY EVERY DAY.



Ride your bike to work.

- ...a cat in your lap.
- ...on some music.
- ...plants in your office.
- ...your feet up.

Share feelings with someone.

Practice Yoga.

Work out at the gym.

Do a good deed.

WEAR EARPLUGS WHEN IT'S NOISY.

Play a round of golf.

Make a list. Then follow it.

- ✓ Take a child to the playground.
- ✓ Take a deep breath and let it all out.
- ✓ Take a leisurely stroll.
- ✓ Take a long bath.
- ✓ Take a nap.
- ✓ Take an herb tea break.
- ✓ Take one day at a time.
- ✓ Take the back roads.
- ✓ Take the stairs.
- ✓ Take time for the sunset—or sunrise.
- ✓ Take up knitting.

Massage your temples.

Quit smoking.

Write a poem.

Write a letter to the editor.

LEARN TO SAY NO.

Roll your shoulders up and around in a circular motion.

TALK TO YOURSELF: "I CAN DO A GREAT JOB." "I CAN STAY CALM UNDER PRESSURE."

Paint a peaceful scene—in your imagination.

Make time for play.

Spend an evening without TV.

Write... down your fears. down your dreams. your congressman.

PRACTICE LAUGHING OUT LOUD.

Watch a cloud for five minutes. Watch an ant or other insect for five minutes.

Sit by a fire. Turn cocktail hour into exercise hour.

Walk barefoot in the grass.

CLASP YOUR HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEAD AND STRETCH YOUR SHOULDERS.

Hans Selye 1907 - 1982 → founder of stress concept
relating to people

Childhood Stress Notes-Sheet:

What stressors were common when I was a child?

- am I answering the question right? am I learning as fast as everyone else (I don't want to be last), stress of playing sports / being picked for a team
- homework, sublings, bullies, parents arguing, "going to hell"

What stressors are common for children now?

- feeling like they need to grow up faster need to be involved in so many things at an early age (mirror adult life)
- cyber bullying, school violence fear, news stress/fear
- economic influence fear of losing home / parents job

What common signs of stress do children in my care show?

- isolate socially, with draw from usual activities, mood swings, emotional outbursts, show aggression, have trouble concentrating

What things about my environment reduce stress for children?

- ERE = environments, ~~exposed~~ relationship, experience
- environment → predictable & controllability help ↓ stress
- * having the childcare routine but w/ some novelty
- * balancing controllability of what they want w/ structure → fairness is getting what each child needs.

relationships → consistency + fairness = trust, everyone can get one favor & fairness is not everyone getting the same thing

What changes could I try to make my environment more stress reducing?

- playing, encouraging laughter → sharing the experience w/ them
- helping them renege their attitudes w/ support → to reduce stress
- recognizing their "ums"

How do the relationships I facilitate help reduce stress for children?