

STRESS REDUCERS FOR PARENTS

- Have children prepare for the next day the night before: school bags ready, clothes out.
- Set the breakfast table before you go to bed.
- Write down all appointments and deadlines.
- Have kids write long-term project due dates on family calendar.
- Practice preventive maintenance with your relationships with your spouse and your kids.
- Be prepared to wait in line(s); read something rather than fume or tap your feet.
- Plan ahead for days that are typically stressful because they are so busy.
- If something not working is an irritation, repair it or replace it.
- Put off doing 'just one more thing' before you run out the door at the last minute.
- Minimize the amount of caffeine in your diet.
- Have 'what if' plans for school delays or snow days or illness or 'I missed the bus' calls.
- If you get stressed out when your plans change or are changed for you, relax and let it go. 'Will I remember in a month or a year or 5 years about this incident?' If not, chill out.
- Take some time for yourself to do whatever you want that will benefit no one but you.
- If something is worrying you, set a specific time period (like 15 or 30 minutes) to worry (or pray) about it; then don't think about it until the specified time.
- Say, 'No' to things for which you don't have the time or the energy or the money.
- Differentiate between what you want and what you need. If you need it, take care of it. If you want it, decide how important it is before stressing yourself out about it.
- If something you have been doing isn't working out the way you want it to, re-evaluate and make a new decision. Kicking yourself because it didn't work is a worthless exercise.
- Be sure that you have relationships that encourage you rather than drain your energy.
- Get enough sleep and enough rest and relaxation.
- If your home is disorganized, organize it. Let someone who likes to do that, if need be.
- If your child has a problem, determine if it is yours or your child's and act accordingly.
- Learn to live one day at a time.
- To relieve tension, take a hot bath or shower.
- Let your kids help you do something for someone else weekly or monthly.
- Focus on understanding rather than being understood.
- Be realistic in scheduling your day; if you have extra down time one day, enjoy it to the hilt!
- Be flexible. Remember; if you won't remember the incident in the future, is it worth a hassle?
- Plan at least a half-day each week when all of the family is at home without anyone else there. Plan at least an evening each week when all of the family is doing the same thing together without anyone else, i.e. friends, relatives. It can be playing games, watching a movie, but something fun.
- Do one thing at a time. When you are with someone, be with that person (including your kids and spouse) and with no one or anything else.
- Do unpleasant or lengthy tasks first in the day; then you get them over with.
- Tell your children and your spouse that you love them at least once each day.
- Show your children and your spouse that you love them at least once each day.
- Show yourself that you love you at least once each day.

(Parenting Seminar, 2002, Bonnie Kiser, M.S., Crosspointe Community Church, Ft Wayne IN)