Kids & Stress

When kids feel stressed, it usually shows in their behaviour.

Even Kids Have Stress!

Causes of Stress for Kids

• Big changes – moving to a new home, starting school or daycare.
• Social issues – being teased, bullied, feeling different or left out.
• Feeling unliked or unloved by parents, family members or others.
• Conflict within the family.
• Schedules that are too busy.
• Problems with school work.

Signs of Stress

• Trouble eating, relaxing or sleeping.
• Increased clinginess, whining, crying or fighting.
• Recurring headaches, tummy aches or neck pain.
• Increased irritability, sadness, panic, anger, anxiety.
• Becoming withdrawn – avoiding family & friends.
• Increased behaviour problems such as biting,
  kicking, poor listening, acting out, impulsiveness.
• Nervous habits like nail biting, hair twisting, thumb sucking.
• Overreacting to minor problems (ex: yelling, crying, shutting down).
• Unusually low energy or high energy & restlessness.
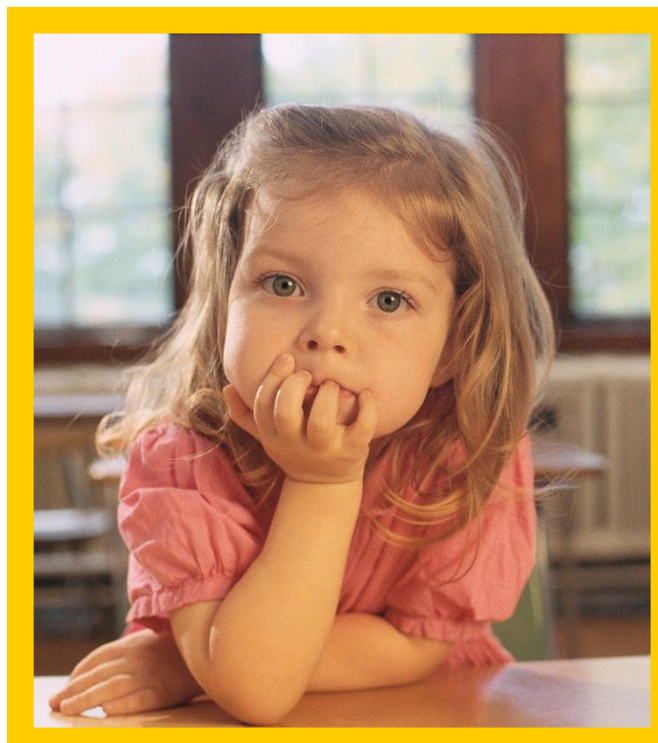
In toddlers & preschoolers, a tantrum is a common response to stressors such as being tired, hungry or bored.

How to Help Kids Handle Stress

• Establish morning routines to get the day off to a good start.
• Provide healthy food to promote a healthy mind & body.
• Make sure they get exercise & time to play.
• Spend time with them & ask them how they feel.
• Give hugs & kisses to show you love them.
• Ensure that their lives are not too busy.
  Some kids need more 'down time' than others.
• Have fun together. A good laugh helps fight off stress.
• Maintain bedtime routines to help them relax & get enough
  sleep. A tired child stresses more easily.
• Learn to manage your own stress.
• Teach them to take slow, deep breaths in stressful moments.
  Even young children can relax this way. *See Handout.*

Very young children can learn ways to manage their own stress. The younger they learn the better!

Do you need more help? Contact your local
Mental Health & Addiction Services Office.

Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868
Mental Health Crisis Line 1-888-737-4668
NL Health Line 1-888-709-2929

Western Health

Stress affects a child's ability to learn, to get along with others & can cause illness.