

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

RECOGNISING & MANAGING STRESS

According to recent studies, over 60% of young people report feeling regularly overwhelmed – with stress impacting their learning, emotional wellbeing and social connections. If left unaddressed, stress can lead to more serious concerns such as anxiety, depression or disengagement. This guide offers ten practical, evidence-based strategies to help children and young people recognise, manage and recover from stress in healthy ways.

1 SPOT THE SUBTLE SIGNS



Look out for changes in mood, behaviour, or energy levels, such as irritability, withdrawal, clinginess, or frequent headaches. These may indicate that a child is feeling overwhelmed. By tuning into these cues early and offering a calm, non-judgemental space to talk, adults can help children feel heard and supported before issues escalate.

2 KEEP CONVERSATIONS FLOWING



Make time for open, informal check-ins – whether it's during car journeys, over dinner, or in quiet classroom moments. Let children know it's okay to talk about what's bothering them. Regular, low-pressure conversations create a safe space where emotions are validated, not dismissed.

3 MAKE MOVEMENT PART OF THE DAY



Physical activity can dramatically reduce stress hormones while improving mood and focus. Encourage movement through activities children genuinely enjoy – from team sports to dancing around the kitchen. Even light activity like stretching or walking the dog can help us all unwind.

4 SUPPORT HEALTHY SLEEP PATTERNS



Poor sleep makes stress harder to manage. Establish a calming evening routine that avoids screens before bedtime and promotes winding down, such as reading, listening to music, or chatting quietly. Good sleep hygiene helps reset mood, enhances concentration, and boosts emotional resilience.

5 PRACTISE MINDFULNESS



Mindfulness doesn't have to mean long periods of meditation. A few slow breaths before lessons or short family meditation sessions before bed can make a real difference. These simple habits help children ground themselves, reduce emotional reactivity, and build inner calm over time.

6 SET DIGITAL BOUNDARIES



Excessive screen time, especially before bed or on social media, is linked with higher stress levels. Set clear expectations for when and where devices can be used and suggest screen-free alternatives like crafts, nature walks, or board games to promote digital balance and reduce overstimulation.

7 NURTURE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS



Strong relationships act as a buffer against stress. Whether it's a trusted adult, a sibling, or a good friend, ensure children have people around them they can talk to and spend quality time with. Help them build those bonds through shared activities and meaningful interaction.

8 PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION



Set realistic goals and praise effort, not just outcomes. When children feel pressured to be perfect, stress naturally follows. Celebrate small wins and help them reframe setbacks as learning opportunities. This helps build confidence and reduces the fear of failure.

9 TEACH EVERYDAY PROBLEM-SOLVING



Use real-life scenarios to build resilience. Encourage children to identify problems, consider possible solutions, and choose a plan of action. Practising these steps builds a sense of control and reduces the helplessness that often accompanies stress.

10 BE THE MODEL THEY NEED



Children notice how adults respond to challenges. Model healthy coping strategies such as taking breaks, asking for help, or calmly expressing frustration. By showing how you manage stress constructively, you help normalise these behaviours and encourage children to do the same.

Meet Our Expert

Anna Bateman is Director of Halcyon Education Ltd, Director for Wellbeing and Family Services at Leigh Trust, and lead expert for mental health at The National College. Anna specialises in strategic mental health solutions for schools, supporting educators and families to improve resilience, emotional literacy, and overall wellbeing for children across the UK.



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