

**Article #1 for Children's Trust -August 2005**  
**Coping with Back-to-School Stress for Parents**

Back-to-school time can be a stressful and overwhelming time of the year for parents financially, emotionally, and physically. There is so much to do and so little time! Simply, caring for your child can cause stress. Parents are expected to meet the demands of the school including buying uniforms and supplies, along with meeting the emotional needs of the kids. Parents, keep in mind that your own emotional needs are just as important. There are many ways that you can cope with stress and anxiety in order for the school year to start off pleasantly and with little conflict.

One of the most important things that you should remember is to understand that stress is part of life, but it should not take over your life. Remember to take care of yourself. Go for a walk, enjoy time with friends, laugh, do something you enjoy like gardening or watching your favorite movie. Stress and anxiety can cause physical pain such as backaches and headaches. You should be aware of what your body is telling you. Slow down, get enough sleep, eat healthy foods and exercise. You can use the kid's bedtimes for hot relaxing baths and meaningful conversations. This could also be a great time to prepare for the upcoming day. Make a To-Do List, make a grocery list, plan out the weekly meals, and plan ahead for "you time". Another very important coping technique is to express your feelings appropriately. Whether it be through journaling, painting, talking, or any other safe behavior, expressing your feelings appropriately can prevent future unwanted negative behaviors and reactions.

Back-to-school time can be stressful and overwhelming, but remembering these few coping techniques can help you as parents cool down when things get hot. Don't let stress make you treat your child in ways you will regret. If you feel like you may lose your temper, count to ten, think about why you are upset, express your feelings appropriately and re-approach the situation when you are calm and comfortable. If stress gets unbearable, talk to a friend or family member, or utilize support services in your area, such as The Center For Family and Youth Services and other mental health agencies, churches or community support groups.

Written by: Jenny Hebert, M.Ed., NCC, LPC Intern  
The Center For Family and Youth Services, Inc.  
Clinical Program Coordinator

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