



A certain amount of family stress is inevitable. It is how a family handles and copes with stress that is truly important. Families can (and some do) develop effective coping skills for handling stress.

How do we know if our family is experiencing stress? Probably the best way is through the individual impressions of family members. Thinking about the general pace of your family life can be helpful. Families under stress may report some of the following:

- Sense of urgency
- Little time to spend together
- Sense of frustration (too much to do)
- Desire for the simpler life
- Never time to relax
- Explosive arguments
- Bickering
- Conversations centered on time and tasks, rather than people and feelings
- Meals eaten in haste
- Constant rushing from place to place
- Escaping into work or other activity
- Isolation in room
- Sense of guilt

The following strategies can help create a less stressful household, and allow more time for interaction among family members:

1. Make lists.
2. Be realistic about time frames.
3. Let go of the compulsion to "get it all done".
4. Accept that there will always be projects in progress.
5. Re-examine your standards for housekeeping.
6. Purchase goods and services that buy you time, if you can afford it.
7. Let go of the "super parent" myth.
8. Give yourself credit for tasks accomplished, even for a small piece of a project.
9. Select commitments very carefully.
10. Learn to say no to things that are not of utmost importance to you.
11. Learn to say yes to things in which your child is directly involved.
12. Try not to spread yourself too thin.
13. Limit time spent on the telephone.