

Dealing With The Stress Of Being A Parent

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Becoming a parent is a life changing event, and while bringing up children certainly can be a joyful experience there's no denying that it can also place huge stresses on you as a mother or father. Commonly recommended ways of dealing with stress in other areas of life tend to involve 'getting away from it all', such as visits to the gym or a game of squash to release the tension. However, being a parent is a full time job and it's not always possible to take time out in this way.

Luckily, there are several ways of dealing with your stress that actively involve your children, and so are much easier to apply to your day to day life. You'll also probably find that enjoying time with your children while simultaneously lowering your stress levels will deepen your mutual bonds and strengthen your relationship - which sounds like a good thing all round!

Once your child is old enough to walk, you'll likely find yourself constantly watching out for them as they use their seemingly unlimited energy to explore both their environment and their own physical skills and potentials. This can sometimes be draining of the parents' energy and a factor of stress, but why not use the situation to your advantage? Harness their energy and curiosity by taking them to a safe place such as a park or the open country, and join in with their games in the sunshine and fresh air. Exercise is a proven stress-buster, and outdoor fun with your kids is probably more enjoyable than a gym workout, and almost certainly less expensive!

Artistic expression is good for your child's development, and also good for the parent's soul. Join in with your child's painting sessions, let yourself go, and get as covered in paint as she does. You might not create a masterpiece, but you'll have fun together and this small reversion to your own childhood can provide relief from your stressed adult world.

In a similar vein, music can be another great aid in the battle against stress. Maybe the most obvious way of using music is to choose something mellow and relaxing, but this is unlikely to appeal to your child as much as it does to you, and so is perhaps best left until after they're in bed and you can listen in peace. A better choice is a piece of music that has energy and encourages dancing. Your child will need no encouragement to get down and boogie, but maybe you will - try it, let yourself go a little, jump around a bit, and you can both laugh with each other and at yourselves.

If you're still feeling stressed, then head for your child's toybox and choose the noisiest toy you can find. Something like a drum is ideal. Let out your pent up frustrations by making a total racket - your child may be bemused at first but should soon enter into the spirit of things. One thing to bear in mind though, is that this last activity is perhaps best conducted in the safety of your own home, and away from the eyes of non-parent adults who may not quite understand!

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