

Monthly Message: Strengthening Families

**KENTUCKY
GOVERNOR'S
OFFICE of
EARLY CHILDHOOD**



Strengthening Families Series: Coping with Stress

All families experience stress. Learn how to manage the effects of stress to create stronger families.





Coping with Stress

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Ready to Grow, Ready to Learn & Ready to Succeed

Parents and caregivers often think about ways to strengthen their children's capabilities through learning. But new research shows that not only can you help your children succeed by teaching new skills, but also by strengthening your family.

Being a parent is a very rewarding and joyful experience, but being a parent can also have its share of stress. Parenting stress is caused by the pressures (stressors) that are placed on parents personally and in relation to their child and can be caused by such things as:

- typical events and life changes (moving to a new city or trouble soothing a crying baby)
- unexpected events (losing a job or discovering your child has a medical problem)
- individual factors (substance abuse or traumatic experiences)
- social factors (relationship problems or feelings of loneliness and isolation)
- community, societal or environmental conditions (poverty, natural disaster)

How parents and families respond to stressors is much more important than the stress itself. Parents and families can increase the likelihood of better outcomes if they support themselves with '**protective factors**' such as:

- **Parental resilience:** *Parents are strong & flexible*
- **Social connections:** *Parents have friends & family*
- **Concrete support in times of need:**
Parents know where to turn for help.
- **Knowledge of parenting & child development:**
Parents know how children grow and learn
- **Social and emotional competence of children:**
Children learn to talk about and handle feelings.

Research shows that these protective factors build family strengths and creates a family environment that promotes optimal child and youth development. In this series, we will explore each protective factor and how it can help your family become stronger.

For information about financial assistance, health insurance, finding work, housing assistance, and much more, visit assistance.ky.gov. You can also find a list of hotlines at chfs.ky.gov/hotline.