

Parents - Encouraging Happy Dreams

JOY

Filling the two hours before sleep with uplifting thoughts and pastimes may be the best bedtime ritual. Such happy activities and thoughts are likely to be incorporated into your children's dreams.

For a relaxed bedtime environment, help your child create a wonderful collage of **Joy**. Get a pile of magazines from friends, garage sales, etc. Let your child cut out **pictures** that remind her/him of various aspects of joy. Paste them on a fun bristle board shape and post it near your child's bed.

Feeling Relaxed
Feeling Peaceful
Feeling Loving
Feeling Loved

Feeling Capable
Feeling Proud
Feeling Admiration
Feeling Admired

Feeling Happy
Feeling Comical
Feeling Influential
Feeling Purposeful

Feeling Trusting
Feeling Hopeful
Feeling Exhilarated
Feeling Uplifted

Feeling Relaxed and Alert
Feeling Full of Radiant Energy
Feeling Noticed
Feeling Gratitude

Feeling Trusted
Feeling Fortunate
Feeling Capable
Feeling Curious

Creating Confidence, Harmony, & Order

When children feel safe at home and at school, and feel that you'll always be there for them, they will feel relaxed, alert, and ready to grow. And their dreams will reflect their growing sense of confidence, harmony, and order.

Although it's true that minor stresses in life can teach children valuable lessons, it is also true too that too much stress can depress, discourage, and demoralize children. And again, their dreams will reflect their feelings.

The Three Main Causes of Stress

Did you know that the three main causes of stress for children and adults are **change** (too much), **unpredictability** (too much), and **unmet needs**?

Too much change and unpredictability can seriously erode a child's sense of safety and confidence. Erratic schedules, moods, and chaotic environments are especially destructive when they are piled on top of other life stressors. Routines, rituals, and order help adults and children feel more **secure**.

You can also prepare children to respond confidently to life's challenges by building a base of strength **every** day. How? Teach children how to visualize positive outcomes, exercise, pray, meditate, and make healthy food choices—that YOU enforce. Continually guide children to places and activities where they can form friendships with loving, supportive people who strive to develop and share courage, compassion, talents, skills, and humor.

I. Unpredictability Is One of the Three Main Causes of Stress

Parent Checklist

Problem 1: Unpredictable Moods

- ◇ I **prevent** or **minimize** frustrations, conflicts, and disappointments
- ◇ I teach family members how to **cope** with life's frustrations, conflicts, and disappointments once they happen

Problem 2: Unpredictable Behavior

- ◇ I pick children up at predictable times
- ◇ I teach social skills related to family, friends, & classmates

Problem 3: Unpredictable Transitions

- ◇ I let children know how long an outing or activity will be
- ◇ I banish sudden "Cease & Desist" orders." E.g., I avoid suddenly turning off the computer, T.V., or stopping play. Instead, I give five-minute, and then, one-minute warnings. E.g., "We're leaving to go to the park in five minutes." (In one minute . . .) "It's five minutes to dinner time." (Bath time, bedtime, etc.) "The computer needs to be turned off in five minutes." (One minute) "I need you to hang up the phone in five minutes." (In one minute . . .)

Problem 4: Unpredictable Daily Schedule

- ◇ I set regular times for breakfast, lunch, snacks, and supper
- ◇ We exercise daily in a natural setting
- ◇ I enforce completing homework at the same time and place
- ◇ I pre-assign chores with a schedule for completion that includes immediate consequences for procrastination. E.g., Meals; Dishes; Groceries; Laundry; Garbage; Yard work; Cleaning; Clutter

- ◇ I create regular times for meditation/prayer/dreamwork/journaling
- ◇ I schedule times for lessons (Art, Music, Dance, Sculpting)
- ◇ I schedule times for family time, community clubs & organizations

Problem 5: Unpredictable Weekend Schedule

- ◇ I create a schedule for weekend errands & chores
- ◇ I set aside time for family outings and for volunteering

Problem 6: Unpredictable Rituals/Routines

- ◇ I create bedtime and waking rituals/routines
- ◇ I create celebration rituals
- ◇ I create greeting and leave-taking rituals

Problem 7: Unpredictable House Rules & Discipline

- ◇ Adults **prevent** misbehavior
 - I communicate rules, expectations, and consequences beforehand in a clear, concise way and post them. My discipline is immediate, consistent, appropriate, and authoritative.
 - I avoid using a tone of voice that is sing-song, approving, or pleading. (Refer to the bestseller "**Supernanny**" by Jo Frost.)
- ◇ Healthy lifestyles foster stable emotions. Rest is crucial. I serve regular, healthy, balanced, moderately sized meals. We exercise vigorously daily.

Problem 7: Unpredictable Social Contact

- ◇ Children love and need to play with friends regularly not "here and there." I schedule **daily** group play and on-on-one play.
- ◇ I create daily opportunities for and hour of physical activity with others (Running games, jumping games, sports, dancing, etc.)

Problem 9: An Unpredictable Environment

Never knowing where anything is. Having too much mess and too much junk.

◇ My family puts items where they belong. We tidy up after ourselves daily.



◇ We also schedule fifteen minutes every day to do general tidying.

Clutter Busters

1. First sort items into four categories—items to **donate** or give away, items to **sell** within a week on e-Bay or at a garage sale, items to **throw away**, and items to **keep**.
2. Take photos of items you'd like to remember for sentimental reasons.
3. Post the "Four Clutter-Begone Rules" where they will be seen. Follow them.

Four Clutter-Begone Rules

Rule One Keep flat surfaces such as dressers, beds, and counters free of all storage items. A useful item such as an attractive lamp or an item of beauty such as a loved sculpture is décor!

Rule Two Create storage spaces and zones for like things. For example, put sweaters together in one area. Buy attractive containers and furniture for storage. Find a place for everything and put everything in its place.

Rule Three Adopt the habit of "One-in-One-out." If you bring one item home, donate, toss out, or give away one item. Paper counts.

Rule Four Create a daily, fifteen-minute, clutter-busting routine. Ideally, at the same time each day, tidy up, organize, and put away.

II. Change Is One of the Three Main Causes of Stress

Problem: Too much change! Too often! Unwelcome changes.

- ◇ Places, people or things change excessively — At Home/School/Community
- ◇ Actions, **plans** or opinions change too much & too often. Moderation is better.

III. Having Unmet Needs Is One of the Three Main Causes of Stress

Three Key Needs of Children and Adults:

1. Belonging

Regular, predictable group and **in-depth** one-on-one involvement

2. Personal Competence

Develop talents, loves, and skills in a variety of areas— spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical

3. Capacity for Self-Determination

Choice is good but don't overdo a good thing. When a child is tired, cranky, or pouty, give **one** clear, concise request in a firm, **low-pitch**, authoritative tone of voice. "I want you to put on the clothes you picked out last night and do it pronto."

If the child delays obeying you, by asking "**Why? Why?**" or by pretending s/he didn't quite understand your clear request, say, "This is your warning. I want you to wash your face and hands, and brush your teeth now." If the child **delays** in any way, discipline them in an appropriate manner, immediately, confidently, and firmly. Refer to Jo Frost's bestseller "Supernanny."

In general: Present children with a couple of choices in situations throughout the day, but explain to the child that when you **ask them to do something**, they are to respect you and the rules, and do it right away. Practice six hypothetical situations—three to illustrate choices and three to illustrate clear requests. Reserve bedtime for **discussions** about the benefits and reasons for your instructions and rules.

Tone of Voice: Use a **no-nonsense, low pitch, firm tone of voice** and clear requests. This is the time to sound authoritative. Don't use a **sing-song voice** that has a pleasant tone. Never sound like you fear the child's negative response. If the child whines or pouts, give a clear warning. "This is your warning... and state the consequence with CONFIDENCE. IMMEDIATELY, carry out the discipline consequence—each and **every** time.

Testing: Most kids test **THREE** times—unless they've seen you give in after their dramatic protests. In which case, you will have a longer training, but persist. They will be better citizens, marriage partners, and co-workers in the future. And they'll raise decent grandchildren!

Are You All Talk and No Discipline?

Hold a family meeting to discuss clear family rules with your child. Then, post them. If s/he “forgets” them, give **one** warning. If s/he disobeys your instruction or the rule again, **immediately** give the child a time-out on the naughty chair with a one-sentence summary. “Daddy is putting you in the naughty chair for five minutes because you didn’t eat three spoonfuls of your peas when I asked you to.” (The minutes match the child’s age.) Avoid intellectual debates with a child E.g., “The reason Daddy wants you to eat three spoonfuls of your peas is . . . Yes, but you’ll be strong . . . You don’t want to be strong? . . . Why not? Daddy is strong. Mommy is strong. Etc. etc.”

A child may delay carrying out your instruction by pretending s/he didn’t hear you. S/he heard. If you offered ice cream, s/he would hear very, very well!

You **undermine** your own authority if you give affection or verbal comfort when the child disregards your instruction. If you feel awkward as an authority figure, hide your misgivings. Practice being authoritative and you’ll gain confidence.

B. Family Rules

1. Every day, do kind things to make other family members happy.
2. Obey your parents right away in a respectful manner.
3. Do not hit, hurt, or yell at anyone.
4. Don’t throw or damage anything.
5. Use kind words. Do not insult, annoy, or call anyone names. E.g., Stinko, Stupid, etc.

Discipline Check-up

Is my manner lack-luster, pleading, or lacking in confidence?

Is my tone overly harsh, mocking, aggressive, or shaming?

Do I discipline for every little thing?

Do I rely on empty ultimatums and threats?

Do I differ from my partner in my style of discipline?

Is my discipline ever delayed, erratic, or lacking in authority?

Do we both give immediate, consistent, and appropriate discipline?

Does the punishment fit the crime?

Am I, or my partner, sometimes harsh and sometimes lenient?

Do I differ from my partner in following up with consequences?

Am I, or my partner, **ever inconsistent** about follow-up?

General Checkup

Name _____

Date _____

- A. Child feels safe at home
 - Feels safe at school and in the community
 - Feels secure in the belief that you will always be there for them
 - Experiences stability, predictability, order, routines, and rituals
 - Experiences immediate, consistent, and appropriate discipline
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- B. Experiences deep attachments to family
 - Enjoys daily and weekly heart-to-heart conversations
 - Is both trusting and discerning
 - Experiences deep attachments to kind friends who nourish growth
-
- Feels empathy and practices care-giving
 - Practices consideration
 - Feels and expresses appreciation
-
- Understands ideas in depth
 - Expresses ideas well
 - Understands and expresses feelings well (courage, tenderness)
-
- Resolves conflicts with respect
 - Knows ways to relieve stress and create harmony
 - Involved in activities that nourish a joyful spirit, mind, and body
-

- C. Feels admired for . . . values skills talents personal qualities
- Gives and receives non-verbal praise
- Gives and receives verbal praise

- D.** Is developing ideals and deepening insights
- Honors and pays attention to dreams
- Honors and pays attention to intuition
- Enjoys daily spiritual practices
- Is learning how to create goals that inspire passion
-

- E.** Tolerates some uncertainty and ambiguity
- Is learning how to reduce confusion and uncertainty
- Experiences enough change
- Experiences enough control, influence, and options
- Experiences sufficient progress
-

- F.** Enjoys creativity: E.g., Writing; Dancing; Drumming outside in nature;
- Art—Notices shapes, details, repetition, line, focal point, composition, color, light and shadow, and perspective; Inventive: Asks “What if...?”
- Enjoys laughter and leisure
- Enjoys exploring, learning, and growing
- Enjoys strategizing
- Has time for daydreaming and imagining
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- G.** Exercises in the sunshine and fresh air; Enjoys walks in nature
- Feels physically healthy and strong
- Enjoys healthy portions of well-balanced meals with the whole family
- Eats at a predictable time and place in a relaxed, pleasant atmosphere

Checklist for Older Children (ages 9-12)

Responding to Key Needs: Did you know that **three key needs** for children are: a sense of **belonging**, a sense of **personal competence**, and a capacity for **self-determination**?

Whenever you meet, take stock of whether these important needs are being met. If you want to prepare the young people in your care for adult life, provide opportunities to fulfill their key needs as they grow. Before you meet, rate **yourself** and the child on a scale of 1-10. Your insights may provide ideas for great heart-to-heart talks.

Child's Sense of Belonging 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Adult Guide's Sense of Belonging 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How can I nourish our sense of belonging in the family and in the community?

Child's Sense of Personal Competence 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Adult Guide's Personal Competence 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Which specific skills and talents can we develop? How can I nourish a sense of personal competence in the social and spiritual life of our family and community?

Child's Capacity for Self-determination 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Adult's Capacity for Self-determination 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How can we practice making choices that nourish spirit, mind, and physical vitality?

Discipline Heaven

Parents are in charge of consistent, prompt enforcement of the family rules. Always back one another up verbally—and non-verbally.

Consistent rules and routines create a sense of security, which in turn, will be reflected in your child's dreams . . .

Before you begin . . . Spend a **month** establishing healthy, daily **routines** with lots of **love** and **playfulness**. Make no exceptions—except for true emergencies.

Make sure your child has had lots of water, regular meals, sleep, and **pleasant activities** on a VERY regular basis (including the weekends) in the weeks leading up to discipline.

Is your child is **cranky**? Does s/he eat regular, healthy, tasty meals. Don't let your child decide "I'm not hungry so I won't eat." Prepare three, balanced meals at the same time each day. Create a pleasant, **relaxing** atmosphere, but tell the child that they must eat most of the food served.

Is your child is hyper? S/he may be **sleep-deprived**. Don't let your child decide "I'm not sleepy." Your child is NOT the exception in the neighborhood. Create healthy sleep hygiene, that is, ten hours of sleep nightly. Don't let your child run the show. You are the parent and you are in charge.

Are the child's medications possibly causing hostility, **hyperness**, sleep, or appetite changes? If so, bring this to the attention of your pharmacist as well as your doctor—immediately. Medications and dosages may need adjusting or stopping altogether.

Spend **five** minutes a day visualizing yourself as an effective disciplinarian.

A. Explain Your Rules and Discipline Beforehand in An Energetic Manner

Write your "Family Rules" on a colorful poster. Post them on the refrigerator or in a prominent place. Discuss the **reasons** for the rules and the **consequences** if they are broken. Show the children where they will sit on the naughty chair and explain how the timing works (one minute for every year). Tell the child that s/he needs to apologize after the "Naughty Chair" discipline is over or s/he will stay for seven minutes more. After nine years of age, provide a "**Reflection Chair**" and a **journal**.

B. Give Clear Instructions & Then An Authoritative Warning

1. Give your child a clear, **authoritative** instruction in a low, no-nonsense voice.

“Jeffry, I need you to put your toys away **now**.”

Precede most instructions with “transitions signals” such as,
“Jeffry, **in five minutes** you will need to pick up your toys.”

“Jenna, calling someone a name is unacceptable. I want you to apologize to your brother, right now.”

2. Clearly give ONE warning in a **low**, “I-mean-business” tone of voice, and restate your instruction.

“Jeffry, this is your **warning**. I need you to put your toys away now.”

“Jenna, this is your warning. Calling someone a name is **unacceptable**. I want you to apologize to your brother, right now.”

DISCIPLINING HELEN — Part 1: The Time-out

H Come to the **Height** of the child.

E Make **Eye** CONTACT.

L Use a **Low**, firm tone of voice.

E Give a very **short**, clear **Explanation**.

“Jeffry, I am putting you on the naughty chair for seven minutes because you did not put your toys away when you were told.”

“Jenna, calling someone a name is unacceptable. I want you to sit here for thirteen minutes and write your reflections in your journal.”

N Place the child (if reluctant) on the **Naughty Chair** (Children older than nine sit on a “reflection chair” and write in their journal). Then, **immediately** walk away without a word. Don’t talk or explain. Not a word. But stay where you can see the child.



Next, be prepared for a long, long test—one you dare not fail. Your patience will be tested. Hang on. Your child is **not** exceptional. You can successfully discipline your child.

When the child leaves the naughty chair (possibly over and over and over), return the child **immediately** to the chair. **Walk away**. Don’t peek! And, **DO NOT SPEAK** even if the child hits, kicks, swears, says “I hate you! I hate you!” Then, if the child is seven years old, reset the timer back to seven minutes.

The first time you carry out this technique, it may take up to three hours—yes, two or three hours of relentless battling. In your frustration, **do not constrain or hold your child tightly**. Obviously, if your child is causing damage, you will need to stop her/him, however, restrain her/him only if absolutely necessary and only for **a few seconds**.

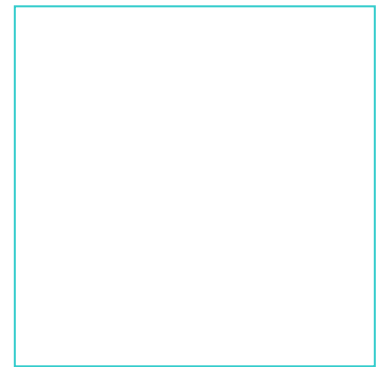
But you must prevail or your whole life will be one long, ever escalating flaunting of your authority. You **MUST** establish that you are a parent who requires respect from your child.

Miracles Really Do Happen

Finally, the child stays put for the full time. But! . . . Yes, there's a but. The timer just might need to be set all over again! Why? Because the child needs to apologize to you before the hugs, smiles, and fun play can begin. So . . . Now you can speak once again.

DISCIPLINING HELEN — Part 2: The Apology

- H** Come to the **Height** of the child.
- E** Make **Eye CONTACT**.
- L** Use a **Low**, firm tone of voice.
- E** Give a very short, clear **Explanation**.
Once again, tell your child why you put her/him on the naughty chair. "Daddy (Mommy) put you on the naughty chair because you didn't pick up your toys when I told you to." Then ask for an apology. "Now, tell Daddy you are sorry."
- N** IF the child says those precious words "I'm SORRY!," then give her/him an enthusiastic **No-Grudge-Hug**. Afterwards, engage in a pleasant activity **with** her/him.



Congratulations! Every time you repeat discipline, it gets shorter and a whole lot **easier**. If you let it slide just **ONCE**, you'll wish you hadn't. Instead, bring peace, respect, and true love to your family.

Note: If your child remains angry for two or more hours and is often angry, this is a cause for deep concern.

Check to see if there are medications that may be involved. These will need to be adjusted. Are their basic needs being met? Are routines strictly followed? Is something happening at school?

Check everything out. Is verbal bullying happening? At home? At the daycare? At school? Don't allow it. It is not acceptable—anywhere or anytime.