

Happy Mother's Day Moms!

May 2008

Parenting *Rules!*

Motherhood can be Stressful...

This special Mother's issue of Parenting Rules! is full of information to help you learn ways to deal with the stress of parenting. Learning to relax and cope with stress can bring peace and serenity to an often hectic lifestyle and will help the whole family to interact in a more calm and loving way.

Raising a child can be a rewarding and joyful experience! However, with the commitment to nurture and provide for another person from birth to 18 years, can come a great deal of additional stress for some Moms. Recognizing the signs of stress can help you to learn new ways of reducing tension, managing stressful situations and becoming a more relaxed parent.



Some of the warning signs and symptoms of being over-stressed are:

- Headaches and muscle tension
- Trouble sleeping
- Irritable and/or impatient
- Constant worrying
- Feeling short tempered and/or agitated
- Trouble thinking clearly
- Nervous habits like nail biting or teeth grinding
- Overreacting to unexpected problems
- Feeling overwhelmed by responsibilities

Read on for some tips on managing stress.

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Time Management...



“I feel like there is never enough time in the day! I am constantly running around, but I never seem to get everything done.”

~ Sue, mother of three

Being a Mom is a full time job! Driving children to dance classes and soccer practice, doctor appointments and teacher conferences can fill up an entire day. With the added time constraint of a job and other household duties many Mothers barely find the time to take a breath and relax.

Time management is one of the keys to making a mother's life run smoother and reducing the amount of stress produced by a hectic day.

The following are tips to help you begin to manage your time and schedule your day:

- ✓ **Learn to say “no”;** don't over-schedule yourself. Especially not just to make other people happy.
- ✓ **Keep a calendar** of your appointments and don't schedule anything unless you check with the calendar first. This will keep you from over-committing your time.
- ✓ **Commit to becoming more organized.** Slow down and put things where they belong. Not only will this cut down on your stress level, it will set a good example for your children.
- ✓ Make **“down time”** for yourself and your family a priority.
- ✓ **Share the responsibilities.** Delegate some of the work to your family; having children share some of the household responsibilities is a good way to teach them to be productive members of a community.

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An Ounce of Prevention! Take Care of Yourself...

Living a healthy lifestyle and taking care of yourself is one of the best ways to stop stress *before* it starts.

Mother's are often so consumed with daily responsibilities and taking care of their family that they tend to neglect themselves and their own basic needs. Finding the time to see to your own health and well-being isn't always easy, but it should be a priority. A Mother who is healthy and well rested is more able to nurture and manage her family without feeling overloaded and over-stressed.



Be sure to make time to do the following for yourself:

- ❖ Make it a goal to get at least **6-8 hours of sleep** each night. Sleep is essential for your body and mind to work at peak performance!
- ❖ Eat a well-balanced, **nutritious diet**. Don't skip meals! Just like a car can't run without gas, your body can't run without food.
- ❖ Make time for **some exercise**. This is a great way to de-stress the body. Take a walk with your family, everyone will benefit from the fresh air and exercise.
- ❖ Get some **time alone**. This one always seems the hardest to accomplish for Mothers. Ask your partner, a friend or relative to sit with the kids so you can have some time to yourself. Don't spend the time catching up on tasks! Just relax and do something for yourself.

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Stress Reduction and Relaxation Techniques...



It is inevitable; we will all feel stress at some point in our lives. Even Moms that are diligent about taking care of themselves and managing their time wisely will eventually feel the effects of stress.

So what is a Mom to do?

Learn what helps you to relax!

While everyone is different in what makes them feel relaxed; here are some suggestion to get you started:

- Get some **fresh air** and create some **space** between you and what is causing your stress.
- Take a **cat nap**, a little sleep can help reduce your tension level.
- **Meditate**; sit quietly and focus on breathing in and out deeply.
- **Exercise** is a great way to blow off some steam and release tension.
- Get together with a **friend** who is willing to listen and help you talk through your feelings.
- Take up a **hobby**, not only will it give you a sense of accomplishment, it is time to just have some **fun!**

"I always thought taking time to meditate was selfish, but now I can see how important it is for me to take time away from the kids to relax and de-stress."

~ Patty, mother of four

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Resources for Mothers...

Prevent Child Abuse Rhode Island

500 Prospect Street Pawtucket, RI 02860
401-728-7920 www.preventchildabuse-ri.org

Rhode Island Parent Information Network

175 Main Street Pawtucket, RI 02860
401-727-4144 www.ripin.org

Mom's Clubs

www.momsclub.org 401-439-4351

Care New England

45 Willard Avenue Providence, RI 02905
1-888-4CARENE www.carenewengland.org

Rhode Island FamilyWorks

1-800-731-0987

ABOUT PARENTING RULES! E-NEWS...



Prevent Child Abuse
Rhode Island



Rhode Island
Family & Children's Trust Fund

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Please share this information with the families in your programs. Thank you!