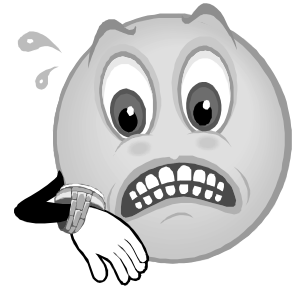




## Parent Assignment #3: Grade 5

To adults, childhood can seem like a carefree time. But kids still experience stress. Things like school and social life can sometimes create pressures that can feel overwhelming for kids. As a parent, you can't protect your kids from stress — but you can help them develop healthy ways to cope with stress and solve everyday problems.



Here are a few ideas:

**Notice out loud.** Tell your child when you notice that something's bothering him or her. If you can, name the feeling you think your child is experiencing. ("It seems like you're still mad about what happened at the playground.") This shouldn't sound like an accusation (as in, "OK, what happened now? Are you still mad about that?") or put a child on the spot. It's just a casual observation that you're interested in hearing more about your child's concern. Be sympathetic and show you care and want to understand.

**Listen to your child.** Ask your child to tell you what's wrong. Listen attentively and calmly — with interest, patience, openness, and caring. Avoid any urge to judge, blame, lecture, or say what you think your child should have done instead. The idea is to let your child's concerns (and feelings) be heard. Try to get the whole story by asking questions like "And then what happened?" Take your time. And let your child take his or her time, too.

**Put a label on it.** Many kids do not yet have words for their feelings. If your child seems angry or frustrated, use those words to help him or her learn to identify the emotions by name. Putting feelings into words helps kids communicate and develop emotional awareness — the ability to recognize their own emotional states. Kids who can do so are less likely to reach the behavioral boiling point where strong emotions get demonstrated through behaviors rather than communicated with words.

**Help your child think of things to do.** If there's a specific problem that's causing stress, talk together about what to do. Encourage your child to think of a couple of ideas. You can get the brainstorm started if necessary, but don't do all the work. Your child's active participation will build confidence. Support the good ideas and add to them as needed. Ask, "How do you think this will work?"

**Listen and move on.** Sometimes talking, listening and feeling understood is all that's needed to help a child's frustrations begin to melt away. Afterwards, try changing the subject and moving on to something more positive and relaxing. Help your child think of something to do to feel better. Don't give the problem more attention than it deserves.

**Limit stress where possible.** If certain situations are causing stress, see if there are ways to change things. For instance, if too many after-school activities consistently cause homework stress, it might be necessary to limit activities to leave time and energy for homework.

**Be patient.** As a parent, it hurts to see your child unhappy or stressed. But try to resist the urge to fix every problem. Instead, focus on helping your child, slowly but surely, grow into a good problem-solver — a kid who knows how to roll with life's ups and downs, put feelings into words, calm down when needed, and bounce back to try again.

Parents can't solve every problem as kids go through life. But by teaching healthy coping strategies, you'll prepare your kids to manage the stresses that come in the future.

Source: [http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/stress\\_coping.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/stress_coping.html)

### **Assignment**

Ask your child to review the day's lesson, and handouts with you. Discuss their feelings about the lesson, and any issues that may have come up for them that day in school.

Choose one or more of the following:

1. If you notice that your child seems to be down in the dumps, stressed, or having a bad day — but doesn't feel like talking — initiate something you can do together. Take a walk, watch a movie, shoot some hoops, or bake some cookies.
2. Help your child identify sources of stress. Write a list of situations and/or activities that are stressful and brainstorm ideas on how to reduce stress.
3. Review the handout “You can beat Stress” and chose one of the activities listed to do together: deep breathing, imagery, meditation, or muscle relaxation. Alternatively, plan an early night to catch up on some sleep.
4. Ask your child about a situation that is stressful for them. Role-play the situation. Brainstorm ideas on how to cope with stress, or how to avoid it? Share some of your own experiences with stress? What worked for you, what didn't work?
5. Dedicate an evening or day as Stress-buster day. Plan a list of activities to do together to relieve both your child's and your stress. Make it a family day out!



Livingston Youth and Community Services

### Parent Assignment #3: Grade 5 Stress Management

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Which assignment did you choose, and why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was this lesson helpful? Yes/ No

Please explain \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



### Raffle Entry

### Parent Assignment #3: Grade 5 Stress Management

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 5

Please complete this sheet and return to LYCS, PO Box 822, Livingston, NJ 07039,  
Fax: 973-992-9318, email: [lycs@livingston.org](mailto:lycs@livingston.org), or leave at reception in school