



Mental Health &
Recovery Services
Board of Allen,
Auglaize, and
Hardin Counties

September 2021 School Newsletter

Stress on our Children from Current Circumstance and Unknown

Your kids are stressed. We all are. But children with developing brains and bodies are particularly vulnerable to the long-term effect of stress. Long-term stress during childhood can interfere with the brain development and other organ systems. It can also lead to lifelong increased anxiety, impaired memory, and mood control. Learn more about this on the [Nationwide Children's Hospital blog](#).

Children are experiencing different stressors right now. One that many have encountered are the intense public debates which can carry into the household or classroom.

Authority figures in their lives, who generally provide guidance, may have differing opinions. From parents and teachers to doctors and governing officials, it can be very confusing and stressful for children. An example may be school having a different policy or recommendation on masks than the home or local health department.

Healthy relationship support from an adult keeps children from experiencing toxic levels of stress and its consequences. Regardless of your thoughts on current issues, it is our job as adults to help them navigate this confusing time.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- **Listen.** Let them ask questions. Or ask, "How does this make you feel?" Make sure to really listen and make sure your child is heard.
- **Validate their feelings.** Children and teen's feelings are big and very real. Give them space to communicate and then acknowledge those feelings. "It is scary." "That is frustrating."
- **Show trust.** Share how things make you feel too or why you set certain rules. You still set the rules for your family and home, explaining your rules can help them understand.
- **Help them de-stress at home.** Go for a walk, journal, finger-paint, play with the family pet, let them listen to the music they want, play a card game, get them laughing, or take a nap.

Learn how to talk with your kids about other topics like alcohol or suicide at [letstalk.care](#).

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

- **Encourage students to respect each other.** Examples: "Let's hear what Jimmy has to say", "please use a calm voice when speaking", use affirmative rather than negative words to engage other's comments. "Please be mindful of how your words might be received by your classmates."
- **Schedule breaks during the day or class.** Give students at every age time to collect themselves, breath, let out some laughs, or even do [guided techniques to destress](#).
- **Create a safe space.** The most important thing is to communicate. Talk with and listen to students. Let them talk about the rules and take ownership of the situation, and then move forward with learning.

Sometimes stress can be too much for kids or adults. If you or a loved one need help or are in crisis, call the 24/7 local Hopeline at 1-800-567-4673 or text 741-741 for support.