



Connecting the Community to Early Care and Education Resources for Young Children & Families

## Caring for Children in Stressful Times

Stress is our natural reaction to the demands placed on us and our ability to meet those demands. Adults and children experience stress due to happy events such as a new sibling, new job or new friends and from difficult life events such as job loss, a death in the family or losing the family home to foreclosure, or change of child care programs. Children may experience stress at school, within the home, in their communities and from information they get from television and the internet. Caring for children who are under stress can really test parents' and child care providers' patience. By becoming aware of our own stressors, we can learn how to cope and model healthy coping skills for children.

While it's usually the last thing you do when under stress, the first step is to take care of yourself. Children mimic adult coping strategies, both healthy and unhealthy, so remember the oxygen mask metaphor: Before you can assist others you must put on your own oxygen mask first. If you run out of emotional "oxygen" you won't be able to assist the people around you! Many adults put everyone else first, even when it is detrimental to their own well-being. By taking care of yourself, you ensure that you have the energy to care for others.

When life is full of more downs than ups, focus on the things you can control. Getting enough rest, exercise and healthy food can help your body and mind cope while you ride life's emotional roller coaster. Even grown ups need time to play. Get together regularly with friends for a game night, a potluck or a barbecue. Have coffee or take a walk with a buddy so you can share what's on your mind.

### Reaching Out to Stressed Kids

Stressed kids are tricky to identify, because many signs of stress can also be attributed to typical growth and development. Like adults, children show signs of stress in a variety of ways, so it is important to pay attention to behavior that is out of the ordinary. Some children will act out in negative ways, but others withdraw or cope by becoming "perfect" children to avoid creating more stress.

In general, signs of stress in children include difficulty making decisions, poor concentration, sensitivity, aggression, anger, restlessness and irritability. They may be more accident prone, complain of tummy aches and headaches, seem tired or have difficulty sleeping. They may bite their fingernails or grind their teeth. They may also talk about scary things such as monsters, robbers and ghosts. When children are under stress, changes in daily routines, poor nutrition and lack of sleep make stress worse.

### Stress Busters

The components of high quality child care help children cope with stress, providing them with healthy ways to express themselves, build relationships with children and adults and feel secure. Turn the page for a list of a stress busting activities that both parents and child care providers can use to help children.

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Our mission is to enrich children's lives through innovative support, education and enhanced family and provider services.

Our programs put families at the center of a community of support services.

## Community Resource Spotlight

### Stress Busters continued from page 1...

**Get active:** Take walks outdoors, play tag, climb rocks or play structures, toss a ball.

**Get creative:** Paint or draw pictures of happy things, funny things or sad things. Older children can write or draw in journals.

**Engage the five senses:** Play with sand, water or clay and introduce new materials such as birdseed or block ice.

**Spend time together:** Offer hugs, play a game, sit and chat, play with puppets or blow bubbles.

**Let them cry:** Both boys and girls need to cry. Ask kindly, "Can I sit with you?" or ask gently what the tears were about, though sometimes children may not be able to explain them. Provide reassurance that it is okay to cry.

**Read a book or tell a story:** Stories can help children understand what they are going through and hear how other children have handled tough times.

**Stick to a routine:** Post a schedule and use pictures to help children understand what will happen next. You don't have to stick to a rigid schedule, just follow a predictable pattern each day.

**Keep things simple:** Stick to your routine and set realistic expectations for the child's developmental level.

Stress management skills have life-long benefits and can help children (and adults!) deal with difficult feelings like anger, disappointment and fear. Consider stressful times as teachable moments.

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### Helpful Materials Available in CFC Resouce Libraries:

- "A Show of Hands: Using Puppets with Young Children" by Ingrid M. Crepeau and M. Ann Richards
- "A Place of Our Own: Economic Insecurity" DVD
- "Touchpoints ages 3-6: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development" by T. Berry Brazelton
- "The Way I Feel" by Janan Cain
- "Mommy Don't Go" by Elizabeth Crary
- "I'm Scared" by Elizabeth Crary
- "The Runaway Bunny" by Margaret Wise Brown
- "Love You Forever" by Robert Munsch

### New Legislation:

AB 1368 (Adams) extends to family child care the requirement that at least one staff member who has a current course completion in pediatric CPR & First Aid is onsite when children are present and is present with the children when providers are offsite for facility activities.

### Health Reporting Reminder:

If any communicable disease outbreak occurs in your facility (including H1N1), licensees are to report these incidents within 7 days to the licensing agency (using LIC 624 form) and the local public health department. This reporting requirement applies to both children in care, as well as child care staff who have been infected with the H1N1 virus, or any other communicable disease.

Visit [www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org](http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org) and search "exposure to communicable disease" for a list of diseases and their reporting urgency levels. Search "Excluding Children Due to Illness" for 4 steps to creating a healthier program.

**Choices**   
for Children

Presents

The 19th Annual Child Care Professional  
Appreciation Breakfast

**Planting Seeds of the Future:**  
Featuring **Robert (Bob) Brunson:**  
**How to Raise Emotionally  
Healthy Children**



April 10th, 2010

at the **Lake Tahoe Golf Course**  
from: 8 am to 12 pm

We look forward to seeing you there!

**December**

- 1- Play & Learn 10:30 am - 12:30 pm.  
Topic: "Gifts to Make" Enjoy a free gift and lunch and a great packet of home made gift ideas.
- 11- Annual CfC Winter Party 2:15-4:15 at the Diamond Valley School Gym. Crafts, food and pictures with Santa.
- 23- Office Closing at 2 pm for the Holiday
- 24&25- Office Closed for the Holiday
- 31- Office Closing at 2 pm for the Holiday



**January**

- 1- New Year's Day - Office Closed for the Holiday
- 5- Play & Learn 10:30 am - 12:30 pm. Topic: "Getting in Touch: Find out how YOUR child learns (part 1)" Enjoy a free gift and lunch.
- 13- Licensing Orientation, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at Choices for Children office in South Lake Tahoe
- 19- Play & Learn 10:30 am - 12:30 pm.  
Topic: "Best Practices to Optimize Learning for YOUR Child (part 2)" Enjoy a free gift and lunch.

**February**

- 2- Play & Learn 10:30 am - 12:30 pm. Topic: "The Whole Truth about Whole Grains"  
Learn why your child will benefit from a whole new diet. Enjoy a free gift and lunch.
- 16- Play & Learn 10:30 am - 12:30 pm.  
Topic: "Control Yourself!: Raising children who can manage their emotions and respect limits" Enjoy a free gift and lunch.

**Make it a Homemade Holiday!**



Yes, homemade gifts can definitely be less expensive, providing welcome relief to a tight budget. Beyond that, however, homemade gifts truly capture the spirit of giving during the holidays. An added bonus, if you make the gifts with your children, they can experience the spirit of giving first-hand. That is priceless- indeed! Choices for Children has gathered a bundle of homemade gift ideas to suit all abilities and budgets. Visit one of our office locations for a printed copy or call or email us and we can email you an electronic copy.

**Got Vacancies?**

Competing in today's child care business can be challenging. Give your program an added value by completing our CCIP Home Study Packets and market your "quality program".

Topics include:

- The Business of Family Child Care
- Parent & Provider Relationships & Professional Development
- Quality Care for Infants & Toddlers
- Baby Steps: The Early Months
- Guidance & Discipline for Young Children
- Room to Grow: Creating Environments for Healthy Development

Upon completion of a module, you will receive a certificate of completion you can proudly post in your facility!



CfC Wishes You  
Peace, Health & Friendship  
during the Holidays

CFC Vous Souhaitez  
Paix, Santé et Amitié  
durant les Fêtes de Fin d'Année.

CFC Desea  
Paz, Buena Salud y Amistad  
durante los Días Festivos

Choices for Children is a non-profit child care Resource & Referral Agency offering the following family services:

Our **Resource & Referral** program is funded by the CA State Department of Education. We offer referrals to licensed and license exempt providers for families seeking child care. Early care and education and our Resource Center is available for parents & providers.

Our **Subsidized Child Care Program** utilizes state and federal funds to provide payment for child care services for qualifying families. Program divisions are: Alternative Payment Program, Respite Program, Federal Block Grant, and Child Care Development Block Grant.

The **Child Care Food Program** is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and provides cash reimbursement to licensed family child care providers and trustline approved providers for serving nutritious meals and snacks to children 12 and under who are enrolled.

## How to Spot Quality in Child Care:

Look for caregivers who:

- Have children within sight and hearing at all times
- Show warmth and support
- Follow standards for health and safety
- Help children get the most out of every learning situation
- Welcome parents into their program
- Set clear limits for behavior
- Have both quiet and active activities during the day
- Plan a balanced, healthy menu for children's snacks and meals
- Share with you about your child's day



✉ This early care and education publication is free of charge. Please send comments, inquiries, address changes and correspondence to the address below.



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