



# Managing Parental Stress

## Stress Reduction Strategies

### **Take Care of Yourself**

The first step to managing your stress is making it a priority. The healthier you are, in body and spirit, the better parent you can be to your child. So make a commitment – you are worth it! Identify some simple things you can do throughout your day to relax or decrease your stress. You are not only recharging your batteries, you are also modeling for your child the importance of taking care of yourself.

### **Recognize When You Need a Break**

Learn to recognize the signs of stress from your body and mind. Headaches, an upset stomach, forgetting things or a short fuse can all be signs that you need a break. The sooner you can recognize the signs, the better you'll get at taking action – BEFORE you blow your top!

### **Switch Gears Between Work and Home**

Career and job demands often create stress. In order to not dump your tension or frustration about work on your loved ones at home, practice deliberately “switching gears” between work and home. Try to start decompressing the last few minutes of your work day. Don't bring work home. When you get home, create a routine that further helps you to switch gears. Turn off your work phone if you can. Play with your baby for 10 minutes before you do anything else. Enlist the help of your children or spouse at home. If you need 30 minutes of “alone time” when you first get home, figure out a plan to make it happen.

### **Practice Relaxation Exercises**

There are many great ways to relax that are healthy, affordable and don't take much time. Sure a week vacation is nice, but you need to find ways each day that you can slow down and take a breather from stress. Whether you choose deep breathing, yoga or just closing your eyes, practice makes perfect. Commit to doing the strategy every day for even a few minutes. You'll feel less stressed, you'll be more relaxed, and you'll find more energy and patience with your children.