

Information Release



Giving Canadian Children Tools to be Media and Life Wise

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TIPS TO HELP CHILDREN MANAGE STRESS

Supportive Involvement in Your Child's Life is Essential

TORONTO – Stress is the body's reaction to change. In situations where change occurs, the body will undergo a physical, mental or emotional response. During the back to school transition, parents may find their child is exhibiting changes in behaviour. Younger children may demonstrate sleep disturbances, become 'clingy' or revert to younger behaviours while older children may experience mood changes, loss of appetite or spend more time alone.

"There are many reasons why children may find the back to school transition challenging," says Linda Millar, a 30-year educator from Ottawa and Education Consultant for Concerned Children's Advertisers (CCA). "They may find it difficult to adjust to new teachers, friends and routines; they may be anxious about their grades and expectations from teachers and their parents; and they may worry about bullying, friendships or even body image."

Millar encourages parents to recognize that, with any change, a certain amount of anxiety is to be expected. CCA offers these tips for parents to help ease their child's stress level:

- **Anxiety about anything new is a normal experience.** Share a situation from your childhood in which you experienced anxiety as a way to let your child know you understand what he or she is going through.
- **Be open and available to talk with your child.** Let your child know that you will always find time to talk about what is going on in his or her life.
- **Routines are important to your child's level of comfort.** Set a bedtime, homework time, sharing time, play time and down time. Try to keep to the schedule as much as possible.
- **Communicate with those who influence your child's life.** As soon as you see signs of stress, make an appointment to speak with your child's teachers, coaches and/or family doctor.
- **Maintain important friendships.** Reinforce how relationships with friends play an important role in our lives. Take the initiative to set up play dates for your children with a variety of their friends.
- **Exercise appropriate strategies handling your own stress.** Children are very observant and watch how parents handle stressful situations. Be a good role model as your child is likely to adopt the strategies you use to cope with stress.
- **Eat Smart.** A balanced diet, in accordance with Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, provides the necessary fuel to nurture your child's brain and body.

- **Move More.** Encourage your child to find a good balance between active and passive activities. Sport, fitness and playtime do a lot to help reduce stress.
- **Be Media Wise.** Be aware of the content and amount of time in which your child interacts with various media.

“As parents and care-givers, you know your child better than anyone,” says Millar. “Keep in touch with your children now and always, and you will be well on your way to helping him or her lead a healthy, happy and productive life!”

For more information on issues of challenge in children’s lives, including bullying, self esteem and healthy, active living, visit CCA’s website at www.cca-kids.ca.

CCA is a non-profit organization of 20 Canadian member companies, supported by over 40 partner companies, including child-centred advertisers, broadcasters and agencies. CCA member companies have a concern for all issues affecting children, as well as a commitment to understanding and contributing solutions to the media and life challenges that children face each day.

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