



STRESS AND LEARNING DISABILITIES

Build Your Child's Coping Skills

Children with learning disabilities often feel emotional and stressed, symptoms can include:

- Sleep difficulty
- Inability to concentrate
- Headaches or stomach aches
- Being irritable or unusually emotional

How to prepare for stressful times

- Help your child learn how to name their feelings using words such as angry, embarrassed, anxious or disappointed.

Ask them to name good feelings too – proud, happy, comfortable.

- What triggers these feelings? Stress can happen at school, at home and from peers.
- Talk about what was happening when they felt stressed. Reading in class? Not finishing their homework? Making a list of stressful events will help them prepare for stressful times instead of being caught unaware.

Learn coping skills

Our body reacts to feeling stressed. What happens when your child feels overwhelmed? Maybe your child breathes faster, feels shaky or frozen? Make a list of the triggers and what helps your child to remain calm.

Some things your child can do anywhere when feeling stressed:

- Squeeze putty or small rubber balls.
- Focus on slow, deep breathing – count to four breathing in then out.
- Write a positive statement for him to say to himself such as "I am calm, I am relaxed, I am peaceful, I am happy, I am safe."
- Create an imaginary short story or happy scene your child can see in their mind when they are feeling fearful or anxious.

Some things you can do to help your child stay calm:

- Encourage playing sports, music or games depending on his interests.
- Help your child's mind relax by slowly and quietly talking about each part of their body, helping them to relax one part at a time.

References and information provided by:

-www.ncl.org

-pbs.org

Visit parentnetworkwny.org for more info.