



# 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](http://parentnetworkwny.org) for more info.*



The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H325160003. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Carmen Sanchez.