

First Steps Activities

WHAT TO DO:

- MASSAGE YOUR CHILD'S HANDS OR FEET WITH LOTION ONCE A DAY. CHOOSE THE SAME TIME EVERY DAY.

HOW DOES THIS HELP YOUR CHILD HANDLE STRESS?:

- THE PART OF THE BRAIN THAT CAN HANDLE EMOTIONS IS NOT YET DEVELOPED IN BABIES AND TODDLERS. BY BEING CLOSE TO YOU WHILE YOU ARE CALM, YOUR BABY OR TODDLER'S SYSTEM BECOMES CALM.
 - BABIES' AND TODDLER'S BRAINS ARE MORE ACTIVE WHEN THEY RECEIVE GOOD TOUCH.
 - WHEN YOU DO IT AT THE SAME TIME EVERY DAY, YOUR CHILD IS COMFORTED BY THE ROUTINE.
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WHAT TO DO:

- FOR A FEW MINUTES WHILE YOUR CHILD IS PLAYING, SAY EVERYTHING HE OR SHE IS DOING - JUST LIKE A SPORTS ANNOUNCER.

HOW DOES THIS HELP YOUR CHILD HANDLE STRESS?:

- WHEN YOU GIVE COMMANDS, CORRECTIONS OR ASK QUESTIONS, YOUR CHILD HAS TO PERFORM FOR YOU. WHEN YOU STATE WHAT HE OR SHE IS DOING, IT IS RELAXING AND LETS YOUR CHILD KNOW YOU CARE ABOUT THEM AND WILL GIVE THEM YOUR TIME.
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WHAT TO DO:

- PLAY GIVE AND TAKE WITH A SOFT BALL. IF YOUR CHILD IS OLD ENOUGH, ROLL THE BALL BACK AND FORTH.

HOW DOES THIS HELP YOUR CHILD HANDLE STRESS?:

- GIVE AND TAKE IS A LOT LIKE HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR CHILD. YOUR CHILD FEELS LIKE YOU ARE LISTENING TO HIM OR HER.
- THE BALL MAKES A CONNECTION BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR CHILD. YOUR CHILD NEEDS THAT FEELING OF CONNECTION TO FEEL SAFE.

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WHAT TO DO:

- LET YOUR CHILD HIDE IN A BIG BOX. SAY 'WHERE IS (CHILD'S NAME)?' IN A WORRIED TONE. WHEN YOU 'FIND' HIM OR HER, SAY 'THERE YOU ARE!' AND SHOW THAT YOU ARE HAPPY AND RELIEVED.
- IF YOUR CHILD IS A BABY, PLAY PEEK-A-BOO WITH A SCARF.

HOW DOES THIS HELP YOUR CHILD HANDLE STRESS?:

- BY PLAYING THESE GAMES YOUR CHILD IS WORKING ON HIS OR HER FEELINGS ABOUT SEPARATION. PLAY IS ONE WAY YOUNG CHILDREN CAN WORK THROUGH THEIR FEELINGS, SINCE THEY DON'T HAVE LANGUAGE TO TALK ABOUT THEM.

WHAT TO DO:

- DO THE 'PLASTIC EGG' GAME. LET YOUR CHILD CHOOSE AN EGG AND HAND IT TO YOU. DO WHAT IT SAYS INSIDE THE EGG. IF YOUR CHILD IS OLD ENOUGH YOU CAN HIDE THE EGGS AROUND YOUR ROOM AND LET YOUR CHILD HUNT FOR EACH EGG.
- ITEMS THAT CAN BE TYPED ONTO STRIPS AND PLACED IN THE EGGS FOR THE EGG ACTIVITY MAY INCLUDE: GIVE ME A KISS ON THE CHEEK; PLAY PEEK-A-BOO, CARRY ME AROUND THE ROOM AND TELL ME THE NAMES OF SIX DIFFERENT THINGS I SEE; PLAY 'THIS LITTLE PIGGIE' ON MY TOES; FIND MY BELLY BUTTON; AND PLAY RING AROUND THE ROSEY.

HOW DOES THIS HELP YOUR CHILD HANDLE STRESS?:

- WHEN YOUR CHILD GETS TO BE 'IN CHARGE' BY CHOOSING OR FINDING THE EGGS, IT HELPS HIM OR HER GET FEELINGS UNDER CONTROL.
- BY DOING THE ACTIVITIES IN THE EGGS, YOU ARE MAKING A FUN CONNECTION WITH YOUR CHILD.

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WHAT TO DO:

- TELL YOUR CHILD THE STORY OF HIS OR HER BIRTH. REMEMBER TO KEEP IT POSITIVE!

HOW DOES THIS HELP YOUR CHILD HANDLE STRESS?:

- LISTENING TO YOUR SOOTHING VOICE CAN BE CALMING FOR CHILDREN.
 - YOUR CHILD WILL FEEL SPECIAL, AND WILL FEEL THAT YOU LOVE HIM OR HER.
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WHAT TO DO:

- GIVE YOUR CHILD SOME NEW AND DIFFERENT THINGS TO TASTE. MATCH THEIR REACTION WITH YOUR FACE AND WORDS.

HOW DOES THIS HELP YOUR CHILD HANDLE STRESS?:

- YOUNG CHILDREN NEED THEIR PARENTS TO HELP THEM HANDLE NEW AND SCARY EXPERIENCES. THEY LOOK TO YOU TO SEE YOUR REACTION, TO HELP THEM DECIDE IF IT IS SAFE.
 - BY MATCHING YOUR CHILD'S REACTION HE OR SHE WILL LEARN THAT YOU WILL HELP HIM OR HER WHEN ENCOUNTERING NEW OR SCARY EXPERIENCES.
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WHAT TO DO:

- PLAY WITH COTTON BALLS WITH YOUR CHILD. GENTLY TOUCH YOUR BABY'S CHEEK, OR BELLY WITH THE COTTON BALL. BLOW THE COTTON BALL ACROSS A TABLE AND LET YOUR TODDLER CATCH IT.

HOW DOES THIS HELP YOUR CHILD HANDLE STRESS?:

- WHEN YOU ARE HAVING FUN WITH YOUR CHILD IT HELPS YOUR CHILD FEEL GOOD ABOUT HIM/HERSELF.
- CATCHING THE COTTON BALL MAKES YOUR TODDLER FEEL POWERFUL AND SUCCESSFUL, WHICH HELPS YOUR CHILD'S SELF ESTEEM.

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WHAT TO DO:

- PLAY 'TAKE CARE OF MY OWIE'. WITH A CHEAP RED MARKER, MAKE A PRETEND OWIE ON YOUR ARM OR YOUR CHILD'S ARM. TAKE A COTTON BALL AND WET IT, USE IT TO RUB ON THE 'OWIE' LIKE YOU ARE PUTTING ON SOME ANTISEPTIC CREAM. WHILE YOU DO THIS, PRETEND IT IS A REAL OWIE AND SAY COMFORTING THINGS, 'I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU.' 'IT WILL BE OK'. USE A DRY COTTON BALL TO DRY IT OFF. PUT ON A PLAIN Band-Aid. YOU CAN TAKE TURNS WITH YOUR CHILD - TAKING CARE OF EACH OTHER'S OWIES.

HOW DOES THIS HELP YOUR CHILD HANDLE STRESS?

- CHILDREN HANDLE THEIR FEELINGS THROUGH PLAY. YOUR CHILD MAY HAVE SOME HURTING FEELINGS INSIDE. BY PLAYING A 'NURTURE' GAME LIKE 'OWIE', YOUR CHILD GETS TO PRETEND THE HURT IS ON THE OUTSIDE, AND GET SOME OF THE NURTURING HE OR SHE NEEDS.
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WHAT TO DO:

- USE A MIRROR AND TALK ABOUT WHO IS IN THE MIRROR. PLAY PEEK-A-BOO WITH THE MIRROR. PLAY 'WHERE IS MOMMY' OR 'WHERE IS _____' IN THE MIRROR.

HOW DOES THIS HELP YOUR CHILD HANDLE STRESS?

- CHILDREN ARE CURIOUS ABOUT MIRRORS. THE FUN PLAY WITH MOM, AND THE FOCUS ON HIM OR HER IN A POSITIVE WAY, HELPS CHILDREN FEEL THEY ARE LOVABLE.