



Some Suggested Books for Parents and Children

Book chains may not have the following books on their shelves, so here are some tips for accessing books on children and stress.

- Try your local library. Even if your own branch doesn't have a copy of the book you are looking for, it should be available through an inter-library loan
- Parentbooks is a Toronto-based bookstore specializing in books for parents and children. You can either visit the store in person or visit www.parentbooks.ca to order. Even if they don't have the book you want in stock they will make every effort to get hold of it for you. Their order department advises: "We do a great number of special orders and are very good at researching titles and finding them for customers."
- Amazon.com is an online bookstore with an exceptional search engine that allows you to track down books even if they are out of print! And you can purchase second hand books, which is an excellent option for publications that are not easily available, are out of print, or on back order. It's based in the U.S. So all prices are in U.S. dollars.

BOOKS FOR PARENTS



The Resilience Factor, 7 Essential Skills for Overcoming Life's Inevitable Obstacles

By Karen Reivich, Ph.D, and Andrew Shatté, Ph.D.
Publisher: Broadway Books
ISBN: 0-7679-1190-3
Availability: In print

Despite its subtitle, this book is not a quick-fix, self-help book. Written for and about adults who want to deal more effectively with life's challenges and the stresses they bring, the authors - both psychologists considered experts in resilience research - describe the process as a journey that requires us to change the way we think. Readers take their own Resilience Quotient test that pinpoints their strengths and weaknesses and shows them what skills they need to develop in order to persevere, adapt and, when necessary, overcome. Then comes the hard part - putting knowledge into action. The rest of the book is devoted to helping readers identify the mental shifts they need to make in order to become accurate (not positive) thinkers - which, the authors explain is the key to resilience. And we learn about the benefits of resilience. It's not what happens to us, the experts tell us, but how we respond to what happens that has the greatest influence on our lives. Make no mistake, changing the way you think isn't easy, but for those prepared to make the effort this is a worthwhile read.



The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander

By Barbara Coloroso
Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.
ISBN: 0-00-200648-0
Availability: In print

A common source of stress for children is bullying. Parents know it and schools know it, but we often don't know what to do about it. Barbara Coloroso approaches the topic of bullying from three different perspectives - that of the victim, the bully and those who stand on the sidelines watching. By understanding the role each of these participants play and how the "bullying circle" operates, Coloroso argues, we can begin to see how





that circle can be broken. This book is full of practical advice for parents and teachers as to how they can help kids avoid becoming a target, an aggressor, or assuming any number of onlooker roles. There are no innocent bystanders, in Coloroso's view. As adults, it's our responsibility to help children develop a code of compassion and the best way we can do that is by example. We have to be good caregivers and practice reconciliatory justice when we hear about incidents of bullying. This book shows us how.



The Over-Scheduled Child

By Alvin Rosenfeld, M.D. and Nicole Wise
Publisher: St. Martin's Press
ISBN: 0-312-26339-2
Availability: This book is in print

We all know that trying to do too much causes huge stress in our lives. But there's a lot of evidence out there that suggests that parents - with the best intentions in the world - are simply overloading their kids with activities and commitments. The message of this book is to simplify family life, not have pre-conceived ideas about what children will enjoy, avoid over-emphasizing the importance of winning and figure out what really matters. It's full of useful advice that will help create a stress-free home for children and their parents.



Stress-Proofing Your Child - Mind-Body Exercises to Enhance Your Child's Health

By Sheldon Lewis and Sheila Kay Lewis
Publisher: Bantam Books
ISBN: 0-553-35319-5
Availability: This book is in print

This is a practical book for parents that provides easy-to-learn activities to help children face the challenges of everyday life. Teaching skills such as guided imagery, deep breathing and meditation are covered. Fun and creative exercises to strengthen body-mind fitness with suggested ages are highlighted. Activities that build resilience or "hardiness" are outlined. It provides diverse strategies that help parents focus on what would be most beneficial to their children.



The Stress-Proof Child - A Loving Parent's Guide

By Antoinette Saunders, Ph.D. and Bonnie Remsberg
Publisher: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston
ISBN: 0030696569





Availability: Out of print. Limited availability, try your library

Child psychologist Antoinette Saunders is a pioneer in the field of stress education for children. This book is designed to enable parents to give their children the tools to handle everyday and more complicated stress. The book is filled with advice on recognizing the physical and emotional signs of stress. It gives parents a multitude of exercises and practical techniques, like relaxation, positive thinking, problem-solving and expressing feelings, to help children cope with stress. The book's goal is to help parents raise healthy, stress-proof children in a stress-filled world.



The Emotional Problems of Normal Children How Parents Can Understand and Help

By Stanley Turecki, M.D. and Sarah Wernick, Ph.D.

Publisher: Bantam Books

ISBN: 0553074962

Availability: In print

Child Psychiatrist, Dr. Stanley Turecki offers parents a new way to understand and solve the common emotional problems of children from preschool to adolescence. Dr. Turecki begins with two reassurances to every parent who asks the question "Is there something wrong with my child?":

1. Normal children can have problems
2. Parents can help them

This book offers innovative tools that help make parents more effective and confident through planned communications, parental evaluation, active acceptance and effective discipline. It provides advice on how to collaborate with teachers on school problems. Dr. Turecki teaches parents how to find and use professional help when his suggested strategies fail to help parents help their children overcome their emotional challenges.



Keys to Parenting Your Anxious Child

By Katherine Manassis, M.D. F.R.C.P. (C)

Publisher: Barron's Parenting Keys

ISBN: 0-812-9605-3





"I Think I Can, I Know I Can!"

By Susan Isaacs and Wendy Ritchey, Ph.D.

Publisher: St. Martin's Press

ISBN: 0-312-92678-2

Availability: Limited. It continues to be reprinted but can take several weeks to order.

This is a short, highly readable book that's subtitled "Using self-talk to raise confident, secure kids." KHST! promotes self-talk as being an excellent stress-management technique even for young kids. This book elaborates on the theory and the practice of harnessing this natural process. The authors explain that even though we may not be aware of it, we - children and adults - are always talking to ourselves. Young children tend to talk out loud then gradually the self-talk becomes more internal. Many of our feelings and attitudes, the book suggests, are conditioned by the things we say out loud and to ourselves.

This is a developmentally sound book, with plenty of concrete examples of how children of different ages can be helped to develop a positive voice to help them manage anger, stress and fears.



The Optimistic Child

By Martin E.P. Seligman, Ph.D.

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Company

ISBN: 0-395-69380-2

Availability: In print

Psychologist Martin E.P. Seligman states that the mission of *The Optimistic Child* is, "to teach you how you can bring up your children so that they will enjoy a lifetime of optimism." Pessimism is fast becoming the way children look at the world, he claims, and it's time to reverse that trend.

This is not a book about stress per se but it is about raising resilient children. And, it has often been argued, resilient children know how to handle stress effectively. Seligman, who has studied depression for three decades, argues that his research shows that there is such a thing as "psychological immunization." But this is not as touchy feely as it first appears. *The Optimistic Child* talks about the importance of teaching perseverance and creative problem solving, not about making a child feel better by denying reality. The critical cognitive skills children need to develop, says Seligman, are thought catching, evaluating the evidence, generating accurate explanations and decatastrophizing. Seligman shows how children can be empowered to learn these skills and he uses plenty of real-life examples as illustrations.

The book has been criticized by some as being too optimistic, but Seligman counters that he is only interested in "accurate optimism" and that "negative emotions are part of the richness of life and they are usually healthy responses that encourage us to understand or change the things that upset us."

This is not a quick read but it's worth the effort and is an excellent resource for parents and professionals who work with children.





Is My Child Okay? When Behavior Is a Problem, When It's Not, and When to Seek Help

By Henry A. Paul, MD

Publisher: Dell Publishing, a division of Random House

ISBN: 0-440-50887-8

Availability: In print

This is a helpful, practical guide for parents worried about whether their children's behaviours are normal. Dr. Paul takes a reassuring tone and encourages parents to take a holistic approach when interpreting their children's feelings and actions. There's an excellent cross-referencing system so that underlying causes - such as too much stress - can be seen to influence a range of behaviours from obsessive-compulsive disorders to bed-wetting.



KidStress. What it is, how it feels, how to help

By Georgia Witkin, Ph.D.

Publisher: Penguin Books

ISBN: 0-14-028192-4

Availability: In print

Georgia Witkin, a best-selling author on adult stress, turns her attention to children in this highly readable book which offers, "effective strategies parents can teach their kids for school, family, peers, the world - and everything." Witkin surveyed 800 boys and girls asking them about the biggest stressors in their lives. Their answers surprised her and the parents she spoke to, showing that adults don't always read children's stress signals accurately. This book will be less relevant for parents of preschoolers but there's no harm in reading ahead.



Making Stress Work for You

By Helen Graham

Publisher: Crossing Press

ISBN: 0-89594-948-2

Availability: In print

A stressed parent is going to have a hard time modeling stress-management techniques, so it makes sense for you to learn how to recognize and handle your own stress. This is a sensible guide to adult stress that will teach you how to identify your stressors and what to do about them. Graham is a great believer in finding balance and handling other people's energy. Each chapter ends with a summary of key points that will help you develop an effective plan to make stress work for and not against you.



How to Raise a Child with a High EQ: A Parents' Guide to Emotional Intelligence; By Lawrence Shapiro, Ph. D.





BOOKS FOR CHILDREN



Taming More Dragons

By Martha Belknap

Publisher: Self-published

ISBN: None

Availability: You can order through Parentbooks or call the author direct at 303.447.9642

Taming More Dragons provides a wide range of movement activities, breathing exercises and imagery exercises to help young children learn self-control and how to relax. The book is divided into sections such as Centering and Breathing, Stretching and Moving, Imagining and Creating. These activities would work equally well one-on-one or with a group of children, so parents and teachers will find this a helpful relaxation primer. Other educational materials in the Dragon series are also available from the author.



Don't Pop Your Cork on Mondays!

By Adolph Moser, Ed. D.

Publisher: Landmark Editions Inc.

ISBN: 0-933849-18-4

Availability: In print

In the preface, which is addressed to adults, author Adolph Moser, who is also a psychologist, writes: "Too often we consider our children's problems to be no more than emotional molehills. To the contrary, the stresses young people encounter within their range of experiences can present traumatic mountains for them to scale."

Subtitled "The children's anti-stress book", *Don't Pop Your Cork on Mondays!*, is a popular illustrated handbook for children which explores the causes and effects of stress and what can be done about it. You either like this genre of self-help books for children or you don't. So you be the judge. The reading level is given as age 9 -12 but the illustrations are targetted at a younger age group.



Cool Cats, Calm Kids

By Mary L. Williams

Publisher: Impact Publishers

ISBN: 0-915166-94-1

Availability: In print

This is a short illustrated book that's built on the premise that a cat's nine lives are





based on nine secrets (a.k.a. practices) that children can benefit from. Thus, catnaps helps us relax, stretching is good for you etc. The reading level is given as 9 - 12 but the content is more suited to the 7 - 9 year-old. The subtitle is "Relaxation and stress management for young people," and that's what this little primer is about. It's not rocket science but it could be a great tool for youngsters who know and love cats. Also included are two pages for adult readers offering a brief guide to stress management.



A Boy and a Bear: A Children's Relaxation Book

By Lori Lite
Publisher: Specialty Press Inc.
ISBN: 1-886941-07-6

This is a charming short story for 3 - 8 year-olds that also teaches a simple breathing technique called circular breathing. It incorporates the basic ingredients of story telling that appeal to younger children - repetition, a cuddly animal, a "happy" ending, predictability, rhythm and a child at the centre. Controlled breathing is considered to be one of the most effective stressbusters and here's a way to teach it and tell a story at the same time.



Starbright. Meditations for Children

By Maureen Garth
Publisher: Harper San Francisco, A division of HarperCollins Publishers
ISBN: 0-06-250398-7
Availability: In print

The first 16 pages of *Starbright* serve as an introduction on how mediation helps children relax, drop off to sleep and develop concentration and creativity. Author, Maureen Garth, urges parents to start young - she began when her own daughter was three - and explains how simple visualization can be introduced and built upon. What follows are a series of visualizations - essentially evocative descriptive passages which play on the senses. Some of these may be a bit too culturally specific to suit your family (the concept of the guardian angel and images of baby Jesus assume a Christian readership) but you can easily adapt them. There is nothing prescriptive about the author's approach.



Wemberly Worried

By Kevin Henkes
Publisher: Greenwillow Books
ISBN: 0-688-17027-7





Availability: In print

This delightful book, written and illustrated by Kevin Henkes, begins: "Wemberly worried about everything. Big things. Little things. And things in between. Then it was time for school to start and Wemberly worried even more." This lovely little story would be a perfect choice for pres-school worriers and also for all children getting ready to start school for the first time. Most young children struggle with major changes in their lives and starting school or daycare is a biggie. This is a reassuring story that acknowledges children's fears but leaves them feeling they have control over their lives.



Leo the Late Bloomer

By Robert Kraus, illustrated by Jose Aruego
Publisher: Hapercollins Juvenile Books
ISBN: 0-06443348X
Availability: In print

This classic has been popular with children since it was first published in 1971. Leo the lion isn't reading, writing, speaking or drawing and his father is concerned. Leo's mother isn't worried. She knows her son will be able to do all these things - when he's ready. And he does. Written for children 4 - 8 this story also helps parents and teachers recognize that each child develops at his own pace.

Let us know if you think any other books should be added to this list! Email us at info@psychologyfoundation.org.

