

# PARENTING YOUR STRESSED CHILD

10 Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Practices to Help Your Child Manage Stress and Build Essential Life Skills

MICHELLE L. BAILEY, MD, FAAP

## How to determine if your child is stressed

from *Parenting Your Stressed Child*

Children may display a range of symptoms when under stress. Look for the following signs and symptoms in your child (aged 5-12) to determine if she may be stressed:

### Physical reactions

Headaches, neck pain/stiffness, chest pain/rapid heartbeat, stomachaches, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea/constipation, fatigue

### Changes in lifestyle habits:

Decrease or increase in appetite, sleep disturbances (such as bad dreams, difficulty falling or staying asleep, and increased sleep), poor school performance, less concern about appearance, changes in physical activity habits (such as increased or decreased exercise and/or sports participation)

### Emotional reactions

Tension, irritability/short temper, pervasive sadness, unpredictable changes in mood, loneliness

### Behavioral reactions

Aggression, separation anxiety, difficulty focusing, withdrawal and isolation from friends and/or family, lying, stealing

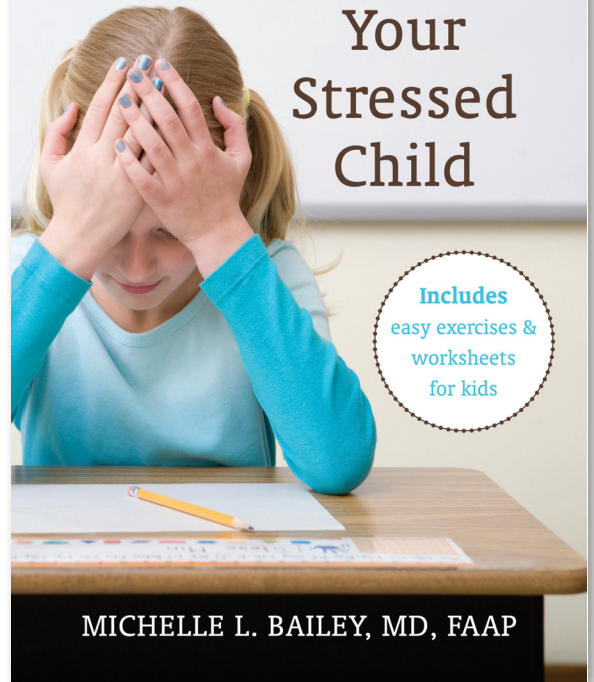
Childhood can be one of the most stressful periods of life.

Even though kids have far fewer responsibilities than adults, the stresses of school, extracurricular activities, and even day-to-day family living can make kids feel overwhelmed and distracted. To make matters worse, children have very little control over the events in their lives, and limited emotional resources for managing their feelings in times of stress.

*Parenting Your Stressed Child* helps parents, teachers, school counselors, and health professionals identify signs of stress in their children and teach them simple mindfulness skills for staying resilient and calm in the face of stress, including breath awareness exercises, mindful movement, progressive muscle relaxation, visualization, loving-kindness, and counting your blessings. Teachers and school counselors will find that these skills help kids focus on their schoolwork and stay calm when they feel distressed. Parents can practice modeling these skills and incorporate them into their own lives in order to improve their children's ability to tolerate stress, both learning and teaching the art of resilience, a character trait that will stay with both parents and children for a lifetime.

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Michelle L. Bailey, MD, FAAP

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## About the Author



**Michelle L. Bailey, MD, FAAP**, is a pediatrician who teaches mindfulness-based stress reduction skills to children in Duke Children's Healthy Lifestyles program. She was trained in Andrew Weil's Fellowship Program in Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona. She directs educational programs for medical professionals at Duke Integrative Medicine in Durham, NC.

[parentingyourstressedchild.com](http://parentingyourstressedchild.com)

## Praise

"I heartily recommend this warm-hearted and easy-to-use book. Pediatrician Michelle Bailey offers her readers a variety of methods for accessing the power of mindfulness to manage stress and cultivate happiness and well-being. Any parent of a stressed-out child should find something useful and sustaining here."

— Jeffrey Brantley, MD, DFAPA, author of *Calming Your Anxious Mind* and founder and director of the mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program at Duke Integrative Medicine in Durham, NC

"Easy-to-read, practical tips tested through personal experience and illustrated with inspiring stories. I will recommend this book to families interested in learning how to use mindful practices to help kids master stress."

— Kathi Kemper, MD, MPH, FAAP, author of *Mental Health Naturally* and *The Holistic Pediatrician*

"This book is written in friendly, accessible language. It offers parents and children proven skills for dealing with stress and creating good mental health."

— Amy Saltzman, MD, director of Still Quiet Place and the Association for Mindfulness in Education

"Michelle Bailey has created a highly applicable and practical hands-on book for parents raising children in the twenty-first century. Not only will the skills in this book be helpful to children, but they will also benefit the parents themselves. It is with great pleasure that I recommend this book."

— Gina M. Biegel, MA, LMFT, psychotherapist and author of *The Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens*

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