

Tips for Parents



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Rhowch amser iddo.
llyw.cymru/rhowchamseriddo

Parenting.
Give it time.
gov.wales/giveittime

Make time to look after yourself and manage stress

Being a parent is the most wonderful and possibly the most difficult role you will have. It isn't always easy and it can prove challenging. That's why it's important to look after yourself as well as your child. It can feel hard if you're tired, stressed and unhappy.



Try to set aside time for yourself

Taking a break to relax means you are more likely to be able to cope. Take 10 minutes to do something for yourself such as listen to music, read a magazine or talk to a friend. Don't spend time feeling guilty about the jobs that should be done when your child is asleep. Use some of this time to relax and do something you enjoy.

Try to eat well

This can be difficult for busy parents but **NHS Healthier Families** (www.nhs.uk/healthier-families) has lots of ideas for simple and quick recipes and tips to stay fit and healthy.

Get together with other parents and their children

Your child will enjoy the company of other children and you will enjoy some adult conversation. There may be groups in your area where you can meet other parents and where your child will have some fun.

Managing your feelings

Most parents have times when they feel tested to their limits. You may feel stressed about personal, medical or financial problems. It may feel even worse when you are tired.

Try to get to know your own body's signals when these feelings are building up. Getting angry or yelling can turn things into a major battle. When you shout at your child it triggers cortisol – a stress hormone. This makes it much harder for them to listen and learn.

Learning to manage your feelings will be beneficial to your health and your relationship with your child. Do not smack or physically punish your child as this is illegal in Wales.

If you feel stress getting the better of you it may help to:

- **Stop and count to 10 or even sing before you act.** Counting and singing engages a different part of your brain. It diffuses tension so you can 'reset' your emotions.
- **Try to breathe out the tension.** Try to breathe out longer than you breathe in.
- **Take some time out.** Leave the room briefly, phone a friend, play your favourite music. Ask a friend or family member to care for your baby or child for a while so you can have time to yourself.
- **Work it off.** Exercise can help you deal with stress-related feelings. Try swimming, walking, running or yoga. You could put your child in their pushchair and go for a walk to let off steam.
- **Ask yourself** is it about what your child has done or is it about you feeling stressed?
- **Think it through.** Are there some things that cause higher levels of stress than others? Are there ways of avoiding those situations?
- **Try not to bottle things up.** It may help to talk it over with a friend or family or talk to other parents. It can be helpful to share experiences and tips.
- **Think whether there are some underlying issues causing your feelings.** If you feel overwhelmed in spite of everything you have tried, it may be worth getting some advice. It may help talking it through with a counsellor or getting some advice on managing your feelings. You could speak to your GP about this. In addition you may find these helplines useful:
 - **Community Advice and Listening Line (C.A.L.L)** – [callhelpline.org.uk](https://www.callhelpline.org.uk) – call on **0800 132 737** (24 hour service), or text 'help' to **81066**. This is a confidential helpline which offers emotional support on mental health and related matters.
 - **Samaritans** ([samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)) call on **116 123** (confidential 24 hour service). You can get in touch about anything that's troubling you, no matter how large or small the issue.

Nobody gets it right all the time. By getting help, you will be doing the best thing for your child, your family and yourself.

Where to get advice and support

Universal parenting support and advice is provided by midwives, health visitors, GPs and your local authority. Early help programmes such as Flying Start (if you live in a Flying Start area) and Families First are also available.

Look after yourself. Meeting up with other parents can be great for your wellbeing. Your local **Family Information Service** (www.fis.wales) will be able to tell you what's on in your area.

For positive parenting tips and expert advice, visit: gov.wales/giveittime

