



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Tips for parents

**Make time to look after
yourself and manage stress**



**Magu plant.
Rhowch amser iddo.**

**Parenting.
Give it time.**

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. It's important to look after yourself as well as your child.



If you had a difficult childhood yourself, if you have mental health issues, financial or housing issues that you are struggling with, or if you are in a relationship that is not going well - this can all affect how capable you feel to cope.

It can be hard when a child has extra support needs, or something is making them unhappy and affecting their behaviour. Some days it is easy to feel overwhelmed.

Top tips

1 Try to set aside time for you

Taking a break to relax means you are more likely to be able to cope, even 10 minutes to do something for yourself will make a difference. 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.



2 Try to eat well

This can be difficult for busy parents but Healthy Weight Healthy You has lots of ideas for simple and quick recipes and tips to stay fit and healthy.

3 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. Your local Family Information Service will be able to tell you what's on in your area as well as provide free and trusted information for you and your family.

4 Managing your feelings

Most parents have times when they feel tested to their limits and it may feel worse when you are tired. Try to get to know your body's signals and recognise when these feelings are building. When you get angry and shout at your child it triggers cortisol – a stress hormone which 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 - this is illegal in Wales.

Finding calm

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 some deep breathing.

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.



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. Talk it over with a friend or family member or talk to other parents. It can be helpful to share experiences and tips.

If you feel overwhelmed in spite of everything you have tried, it may help talking it through or getting some advice on managing your feelings.



Nobody gets it right all the time. By getting help, you will be doing the best thing for your child, your family and yourself. You may find the below helplines useful:

Community Advice and Listening Line (C.A.L.L) call free on 0800 132 737 (confidential 24-hour service) or email call@helpline.wales. C.A.L.L offers emotional support on mental health and related matters.

Samaritans 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.

If you're worried that you or your children are at risk of harm at home or in your community, confidential help is available:

- **NSPCC Helpline**: you can phone for free on 0808 800 5000 Monday to Friday 10am – 4pm, email help@nspcc.org.uk
- **Live Fear Free Helpline**: 0808 80 10 800

If you found this helpful, we have more top tips and information available [here](#)