

Parenting in times of stress

Family harmony at home

Children should always feel safe and secure, especially at home. Here's how positive language and active listening can help maintain a peaceful and happy environment.

Be a role model

The way we behave in front of our children has a huge influence on their own behaviour—so set a great example by:

- Talking kindly to everyone—from friends and family members to the people you meet in your day-to-day life
- Communicating positively with the other adult members of your household
- Demonstrating the importance of maintaining loving, caring relationships

Share the load

- Looking after children and other family members is difficult, but it's much easier when responsibilities are shared
- Try to divide household tasks, childcare and other responsibilities equally among family members so that you are not overwhelmed
- Create a schedule for time 'on' and time 'off' with the other adults in your household, so everyone has a chance to take a break
- Remember that it's okay to ask for help, especially if you are feeling tired or stressed

Manage negative feelings

- If you feel yourself getting stressed or angry, take a 10-second pause and slowly breathe in and out five times. This should help you to respond in a calmer way

- If you sense an argument is starting, then it's time for a short break. Go into another room or, if you can, step outside and wait until you feel the moment has passed.
- Take a look at our tip sheets on **Looking after yourself** and **Anger management advice**

Use positive language

- Ask people to do what you would like them to do—'Please speak more quietly'—instead of telling them what you don't want them to do—'Stop shouting!'
- Praising people makes them feel appreciated, so don't forget to say thank you to those who help you and encourage your child or teen to do the same

Harmony-promoting activities

- Let each person in your household take turns to choose an activity that you can all do together
- Find ways to spend quality time alone with your partner or the other adults in your household

Be an active listener

- Listen carefully when people are talking to you
- Show that you hear what they are saying by nodding your head and asking questions
- It can help to summarise what someone has said before responding, to check you have understood correctly

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These evidence-based parenting resources were developed by Parenting for Lifelong Health in collaboration with [UNICEF, WHO, and other international agencies](#).

