



Dealing with Family Stress

Housing

Affordable housing is a big problem in Juneau. Many families are in shared living spaces trying to find their own homes. Call Alaska Housing Development at 907-780-6666 and see what options are available to help.

What you can do to help your child

- Even though stress levels may be high, **try to be patient with your child**. Reassure them that you love them.
- **Be honest about the situation**, and give your child hope for the future.
- **Create comforting rituals and routines** for your child.

Money Problems

- Did you know that money is one of the top causes of arguments among couples?
- Making it financially in this world is not easy and it is even harder for single parents.
- Children pick up on stress in the family.

What you can do to help your child

- **Help your child feel capable** by involving them in helping you with simple chores, and celebrate their accomplishments.
- **Set a good example in dealing with your own stress**. If children are old enough to understand what is happening, talk with them about coping with stress. Children may act out their stress in negative behaviors - talk to them about healthy stress relievers like getting outside.

Development, Learning & Behavior Issues

Do you have concerns about your child's development or behavior? Connecting with these programs can make a lasting difference for your child and your family.

What you can do to help your child

- **If your child is under age 3:** Call REACH at 907-586-8228 for a free developmental screening and evaluation to see how your child is growing and developing.
- **If your child is age 3 or older:** Call the Juneau School District at 907-523-1700 to discuss your child's needs.
- You know your child better than anyone: **share that knowledge to help providers and doctors help your child**.

Accidents and Illness

Has someone in your family been in an accident or experienced a serious illness?

- When one family member is under medical care, everyone in the family experiences a higher stress level, including young children.
- Recognizing and dealing with the extra stress can help the healing process, and help you cope as a parent.

What you can do to help your child

- **Talk to your child about what is happening** - it's ok to not have all the answers!
- **Continue regular routines, and explain** why some things have to change.
- **Reach out** to friends, family or a doctor if you would like help or advice about accessing additional resources in the community.

Violence in the Family

Domestic violence is the product of a controlling partner - someone who wants power and control in the relationship and resorts to emotional, economic, sexual or physical abuse to get it. Anyone can be a child abuser. You have a right to be safe. No one deserves to be abused.

What you can do to help your child

- Call AWARE at 586-6623 and talk about choices you can make as a parent that might increase your child's safety.
- Call the Office of Children's Services at 465-1650 to discuss concerns about emotional, physical, sexual abuse or neglect of children.
- Help your child feel protected and loved by listening to their needs and concerns and taking them seriously. Remove your child from emotionally, physically, or sexually violent individuals or situations.

Is someone in your family in prison?

You are not alone! Over 1.5 million children have at least one parent in prison. This situation is stressful for not only the adults, but the children as well.

What you can do to help your child

- **Involve your son or daughter with trusted adults** to build positive relationships.
- **Help your child send letters or drawings to the parent in prison** so he or she still feels connected.
- **Encourage your child to talk about his or her feelings**.

Alcohol or Other Drug Misuse

Drug and alcohol addiction is a brain disease that causes a person to lose self-control and make poor decisions. Many people who are addicted to drugs or alcohol have a family history of substance abuse. Stress and depression can steer a person towards using and abusing.

Children affected by a parent's drug and alcohol use may

- **Feel insecure and confused.** Children do not always understand that the adult's mood is based on the amount of alcohol or drugs in the bloodstream.
- **Often feel frightened.** Children around drug and alcohol abuse often witness or are victims of violence.
- **Have developmental delays.** Parental substance abuse interrupts a child's normal development, and places them at a higher risk for emotional, physical and mental health problems.

What you can do to help your child

- **Spend time with your child when not under the influence of alcohol or drugs.**
- **Encourage your child to build positive relationships** with other adults through programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters.
- **Call to find out about available support** when you are ready to make a change. Call the National Helpline at 1-800-662-4357 for treatment referral and services.

Changes

Change can be a good thing, but can feel overwhelming. Some big changes a child can experience include having a parent leave the household, transitioning between many caregivers, being separated from his/her parents, or moving to a new place.

What you can do to help your child

- **Find a routine** and stick to it.
- **Recognize and accept your child's feelings.** Help your child know it is normal to be sad, angry, or scared.
- **Reassure your child** that you love them and will be there for them.

Single Parent? You are not alone!

- Often it is hard to ask for help. The truth is, parenting is a challenging job, and there are no perfect parents. It is okay to ask for help. Start with those closest to you, finding support from relatives, friends and neighbors.

What you can do to help your child

- **Take at least 30 minutes each day to relax and nurture yourself.** Even looking forward to an evening cup of tea can help you cope.
- **Drop everything and spend a half hour each day totally focused on enjoying time with your child.** You will be surprised at how much smoother your day together will be.
- **Connect with other supportive adults.**

Stress and Emotional Health

- Did you know that infants and young children have mental health concerns too? A parent's emotional health can affect children, and when children have an emotional health concern it is stressful for parents.

How emotional health affects your child

- Children with emotional concerns, or have a family member struggling with mental health are more likely to show developmental delays, low academic performance, and difficulties socializing with peers.
- Challenging behaviors in children may be caused by depression, stress, or other mental health concerns.
- A parent with a mental illness may put stress on relationships within the family, which negatively affect the child.

What you can do to help your child

- **Build and call on a support system**, such as family and friends, or a faith community.
- **Explain the situation in simple language to your child, and explain that your child is not to blame.**
- **Recognize and accept your child's feelings.** Tell your child you love them. Try to enjoy a simple activity together with your kids.

Grief and Loss

The loss of a loved one is one of the hardest things in life to go through. Your pain is made even more difficult because your family is hurting, as well. Children need to grieve the loss of a loved one and it's important their feelings are acknowledged.

Some things that a grieving child may do

- Imitate the behaviors of the person who passed away
- Talk about the person who died in the present tense
- Tell the story of their loss again and again

What you can do to help your child

- **Spend extra time with your children.**
- **Help your kids return to their normal routine** as soon as possible.
- **Validate your child's feelings** of sadness, anger and hurt.

Support for Moms: Beyond Baby Blues

Perinatal Mood Disorders (PMDs) are a set of disorders that can occur any time during pregnancy or the first year after giving birth, they include depression, anxiety, panic, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Postpartum Psychosis. 10-20% of women will develop a PMD, making it the most common complication of birth.

Symptoms of Perinatal Mood Disorders

- **In Parents:** low moods, tearful, irritable or anxious, feeling overwhelmed, tired, trouble sleeping, feeling hopeless. You may feel angry with your baby. You may be passive towards your baby.
- **In Babies:** crying a lot, feeding or sleeping problems, lack of attachment, higher heart rate.

What You Can Do

- **Ask for help.** Ask your healthcare provider for a depression screening. Ask people close to you for support.
- **Educate yourself and those around you.**

Support for Dads

Dad's n Kiddos Play Group

Meets the first Saturday of every month hosted by Bartlett Beginnings. Meet other fathers and discuss topics of interest and education while playing. Call 907-796-8424 for more information.

The Family Pages is a guide to the many resources available to families in Juneau to help support their children's health, growth, and development. This guide is a Juneau Partnership for Families and Children project, a coalition of local and state agencies that work collaboratively to promote shared, broad-based communication and support for families with young children.

Partner Agencies: SEAAEYC, Alaska Association of School Boards, Bartlett Beginnings, Hello BABY, JAMHI Family, Juneau Family Birth Center, Juneau Public Health, Juneau Public Libraries, Juneau School District, Office of Children's Services, REACH, Inc., SAIL, Sealaska Heritage Institute Baby Raven Reads, Tlingit & Haida Head Start, United Way of Southeast Alaska

This guide was produced and updated by SEAAEYC, 3200 Hospital Drive, Suite 204, Juneau, AK 99801 | 907-789-1235. Please contact the Partnerships Coordinator with any corrections or additions, info@aeyc-sea.org. A copy of this information along with other helpful family resources are available at www.aeyc-sea.org. V.0725