



TIPS TO “MAXIMIZE LOVE, MANAGE STRESS”

With Your Infant (0-12 months)

- **Hold, kiss, and cuddle.** Provide lots of loving attention and touch. Babies don't get spoiled, so there is no need to hold back on showing love.
- **Respond to them.** Answer your baby in a loving voice when they make a sound or movement.
- **Play together.** Hold your baby close, smile, and make silly sounds or faces. Play games like “peek-a-boo.” Take a break if they seem overwhelmed or try to look away.
- **Comfort them.** Comfort your baby when they get fussy or cry. They might be tired, hungry, or uncomfortable. Try rocking them or singing a lullaby. It will take time to learn what works best.
- **Have a routine.** Have consistent times and ways of doing daily activities like feeding, bathing, reading, and bedtime. Routines help babies and young children feel safe and know what to expect. They also help adults manage stress.

With Your Toddler (12-36 months)

- **Snuggle up.** Hug and cuddle with your toddler so they feel safe and loved.
- **Encourage them.** Be supportive and encouraging when your child tries new things.
- **Involve them.** Invite your toddler to help with everyday tasks, like handing you clothes for the laundry.
- **Talk about feelings.** Help your child describe how they feel. Let them know that all feelings are OK, and that you are there for them when they are happy or upset.
- **Offer choices.** Offer choices like what to wear or eat, but give a limited number of options. For example, “It's time for a snack. Do you want an apple or grapes?”
- **Set basic limits.** Focus on safety-related rules like not hitting people. Younger toddler: put a “No” in front of the thing you don't want your child to do and redirect them to another activity. Older toddler: give a simple explanation for the rule and what they could do instead. Use the same rules consistently and do your best to stay calm.

Take care of yourself. When life gets stressful, it's important to take care of yourself so you can be there for your child. Try sharing tasks with friends or family members, taking walks, doing a hobby you enjoy, or practicing deep breathing. Try different strategies and see what works best for you. Be sure to ask for help when you need it, and talk to your doctor if you often feel sad or stressed. All parents and caregivers need help.