

# Can Your Kids Get Burned Out?

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When you think of someone who is burned out, you might picture an overworked business executive or an athlete training too hard for the Olympics. The truth is that anyone can become overwhelmed at any age. **Kids experience burnout too.**

Sure, they don't usually have mortgages and jobs. However, they do have internal and external pressures of their own. School, friendships, and other challenges of growing up can be a lot to deal with.

**As a parent, you can help.** Try these tips for raising children who will thrive.

## **How to Restore Energy**

Emotional fatigue is a major sign of burnout in children and adults. Show your son or daughter how to recharge when they're feeling drained.

**Try these methods:**

- 1. Cut back.** Doing less could be part of the solution. Many children are overscheduled today with academic and extracurricular activities. **Focus on the clubs and sports that your child enjoys most and allow plenty of free time in between.**
- 2. Prioritize sleep.** Lack of sufficient sleep at a young age can affect body weight, mental health, behavior, and cognitive performance, according to the Sleep Foundation. Nine to twelve hours of sleep each day is recommended for school-age children, with those numbers decreasing as they grow older.

3. **Eat healthy.** Kids can be picky eaters, but you can help them make nutritious choices. **Complex carbohydrates, nuts, and foods rich in calcium may be especially beneficial for fighting stress.**
4. **Work out.** Physical activity is another constructive way to deal with pressure. Exercise together with family fitness classes at your local gym or neighborhood park. Ride bikes or take a walk after dinner.
5. **Practice self-care.** Introduce your child to self-care and relaxation methods.

### **How to Build and Maintain Connections**

Prevent burnout by teaching your child how to create community and stay engaged. They'll be more resilient when they know how to motivate themselves and seek support from others.

#### **Keep these ideas in mind:**

1. **Offer choices. Burnout often involves a sense of losing control.** Let your child make decisions about which homework assignment to tackle first or what they want for a snack.
2. **Play around.** Is your child eager to please or concerned about how they measure up to others? They may lighten up if you suggest games without any rules or final scores.
3. **Make art.** Encourage your child's creativity. Crafts are a practical way to take their mind off their troubles and build their self-esteem.
4. **Monitor media consumption.** Your family may need a break from politics and

pandemics if you keep CNN playing in the background for much of the day. Pay attention to what your children are seeing and hearing in stores and other public places too.

**5. Prepare for life events.** Your child may be more vulnerable than usual if your family moved recently or is going through a divorce. **Maintaining routines can help them feel secure.**

**6. Provide a role model. The way you handle stress will influence your children.** Try to maintain a positive attitude and healthy lifestyle even when you're recovering from remote working and hybrid learning.

**7. Talk about emotions.** Let your child know that it's okay to feel angry or sad. If you spend quality time together on a regular basis, you'll make it easier to have sensitive conversations.

**Be alert for signs of burnout in your child.** That may include insomnia, irritability, and withdrawing from activities they used to enjoy. With your support and professional counseling as needed, you can guide them back to a happier and more balanced life.