

Time Out

Some Tips for Those of You Who Don't Have Enough Stress in Your Life

Burnout and stress may be as foreign to you as traditional Uzbekistani folk dancing. You may be the calmest and coolest person in any room you enter. You may actually be looking for ways to add stress to your life so that you can understand what the rest of us are fussing about. If so, here are some tips.

How to Add Stress to Your Life

- ▲ Help each child in your care lose a sock or shoe every day for two weeks. When parents ask what's going on, just shrug and smile.
- ▲ Enact a no-nap policy.
- ▲ Every time a parent makes a request, smile, say, "I'll take care of it," and completely forget the request as soon as possible. Never mention it again. If the parent brings it up, act confused and puzzled.
- ▲ Forget ratios—the more, the merrier!
- ▲ Three words: toddlers, scissors, kittens.
- ▲ Work longer hours and burn 25 percent of your income each payday.
- ▲ Avoid trying anything new. Any excuse will do: *It's too messy. It's too expensive. There's not enough time. The kids won't like it.* This ensures hours of whiny, bored youngsters and the stress that they bring.

- ▲ Tell everyone you meet what you think about everything . . . all the time. Give advice freely, especially on topics you know nothing about. The stress you add to the lives of others will come back to you threefold.
- ▲ Add at least three items to your to-do list for each task you complete.
- ▲ Be a minimum of forty minutes late everywhere you go.
- ▲ Play loud music for the children all day, every day.
- ▲ Expect perfection from everyone you come into contact with: the children, the parents, your family, and *especially* yourself!
- ▲ Don't let emotional wounds heal—pick away the scab every chance you get. Adopt a "Let It Fester" policy.
- ▲ Cut communication with parents in your program (and your loved ones) down to once a week. Talk less and grunt more. If there are problems or concerns, hold off even longer.
- ▲ Swear off outdoor time for the kids. Make any excuse for keeping them indoors every day. Then act surprised when the yelling, running, and fighting start.
- ▲ Quit sleeping, give up exercise, and eat anything you want.
- ▲ Make time with your significant other every day to doubt, shout, and pout.
- ▲ Stop accepting payment for care. Just do it because you love it so much.
- ▲ Ignore inquisitive four-year-olds.

- ▲ Let the phone ring twenty times before answering. If it's a parent, pretend you get disconnected. Keep the ringer set as loud as possible, especially during quiet time.
- ▲ Forget nutritional guidelines. Serve only sugary food, Kool-Aid, cookies, and the Halloween candy you stock up on each year when it goes on clearance.
- ▲ Buy eleven blue chairs and one pink chair for the pre-schoolers to use.

This list was compiled with the help of providers via the Family Child Care Professionals of South Dakota Web site, www.sdfcc.org.

HANDOUT 1

TEST YOUR BURNOUT LEVEL



Are you heading for a meltdown? Take the quiz:

1. Do you get tired easily? Yes Sometimes No
2. Do you feel worn out? Yes Sometimes No
3. Do you get upset when people tell you that you don't look too good today? Yes Sometimes No
4. Are you working hard and feeling as if you aren't accomplishing anything? Yes Sometimes No
5. Are you more sarcastic and disappointed than usual? Yes Sometimes No
6. Are you sad a lot and aren't sure why? Yes Sometimes No
7. Are you more forgetful than usual? Yes Sometimes No
8. Do you expect more and more from those around you? Yes Sometimes No
9. Are you grumpy and moody a lot more often? Yes Sometimes No
10. Are you spending less time with friends/family? Yes Sometimes No
11. Are you too busy to keep up with everyday things? Yes Sometimes No
12. Do you feel bad a lot or are sick all the time? Yes Sometimes No
13. Do you feel confused at the end of the day? Yes Sometimes No
14. Are you having trouble feeling happy? Yes Sometimes No
15. Are you able to laugh at a joke about yourself? Yes Sometimes No
16. Do you have very little to say to people? Yes Sometimes No

PHYSICAL

MENTAL

EMOTIONAL

SOCIAL



