

Knowing your child's comfort level: **signs to watch out for**

So, you want to help your child grow their persistence 'muscles'?

The trick is to let them experience some challenges that generate helpful discomfort or 'good stress' and watch out for situations that create 'bad stress' or negative warning signs.



What helpful challenges look like

Help your child view situations that 'push' them as challenges rather than threats. If they don't perceive something as a threat (which is scary), then the fear they might normally experience can turn to anticipation or even excitement when they are faced with a challenge.

Helpful discomfort or 'good stress' only lasts a short time and can:

- motivate your child to improve their performance
- challenge your child to improve themselves
- help your child feel energised and motivated
- make your child feel a bit stressed while also feeling like they can cope
- feel exciting to your child
- help your child stay focused
- give your child positive thoughts about themselves and life
- increase your child's heart rate for a short time
- make your child feel like their thoughts are racing for a short time.

What warning signs to look out for

The trick is to know your child and recognise when 'challenge' becomes 'bad stress'. Stress can negatively affect your child's physical and mental health if it continues over a long time and becomes overwhelming. It can affect their body, thoughts and feelings, and their behaviour.

Your child may be experiencing negative stress if they:

- feel stress that continues over a long time
- feel very anxious and concerned
- feel overwhelmed
- feel like they cannot cope
- feel afraid
- find it hard to concentrate and stay focused
- cannot perform tasks
- do not want to take part in activities they usually enjoy
- have negative thoughts about life and themselves
- feel sick in the stomach (nausea, diarrhoea, constipation)
- cannot sleep or sleep too much
- eat more or less than usual.

Find out more



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