

## GOOD NEWS: Toxic stress is treatable!



Because negative experiences can be difficult to talk about, toxic stress often goes unrecognized. However, there are steps that parents can take to help their children cope with difficult life events. The first step is to talk about it! It may feel a little uncomfortable at first and talking about it can even cause you to feel mixed emotions such as guilt, embarrassment, or even irritation. However, it is important to bring up the topic. It is nothing to be ashamed of, remember, negative experiences can happen to anyone.

**A PARENT IS THE NUMBER ONE SHIELD AGAINST THE EFFECTS OF CHILDHOOD TOXIC STRESS**



**Do not try to do it alone.**

Consider talking to your child's:

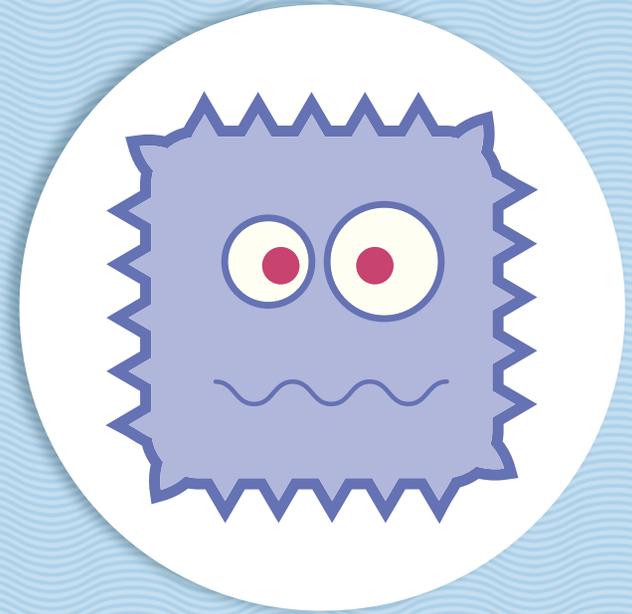
- doctor
- school guidance counselor
- psychologist
- teacher
- clergy member

You may also contact the  
Center for Child Stress and Health!

[www.fsustress.org](http://www.fsustress.org)

### Center for Child Stress & Health

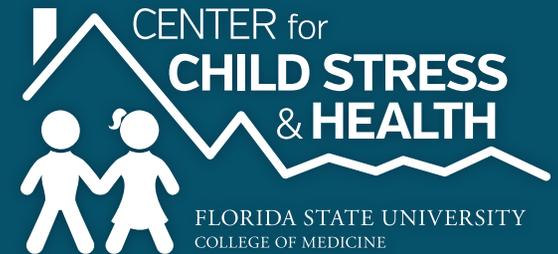
Florida State University College of Medicine  
Immokalee Health Education Site  
1441 Heritage Boulevard  
Immokalee, Florida 34142  
1-239-658-3123



# TOXIC STRESS



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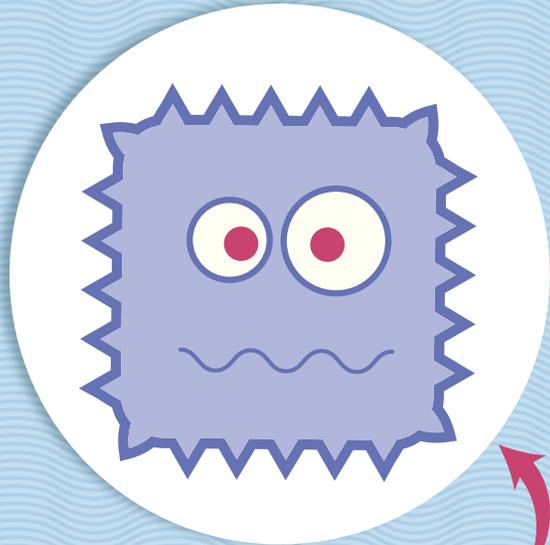


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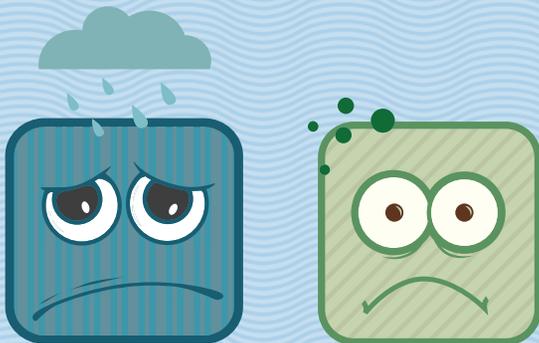
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## What is toxic stress?

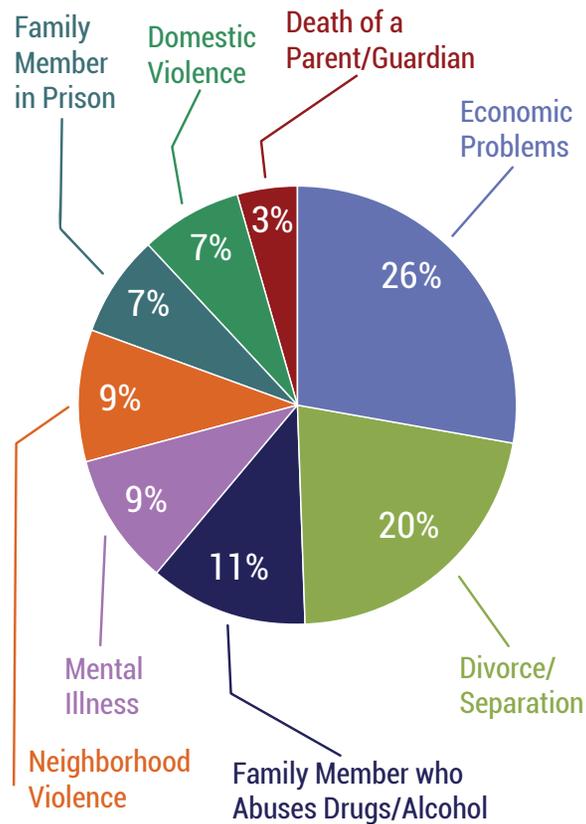
Anybody can experience stress regardless of their age. When we experience a stressful situation, our body reacts to it. For instance, we may feel muscle tension in our shoulders or we may get headaches or migraines until the stress goes away. However, not all stress is the same. Toxic stress occurs when we experience stressful and negative experiences over a long period of time. Toxic stress can be especially harmful to children. Toxic stress during childhood can lead to adult health problems like heart disease, cancer, asthma, and depression.



## Why does toxic stress happen?

Life can be difficult and unpredictable! Many families go through difficult experiences.

### Common Causes of Toxic Stress in Children Living in the U.S.



## Signs of distress

### Your child...

- is hyperactive
- is showing verbal aggression or physical aggression
- shows anger or irritability, is arguing a lot, is defiant, or is vindictive
- is challenging adults and their rules
- is withdrawn, wants to be alone, or is avoiding people or situations
- seems "on edge"
- is dazed or is daydreaming often
- is forgetful
- is shutting down emotionally

