

Parental Factors That Can Cause Problems (A Partial List)

*Adapted from a list by Steven Gutstein & Rachelle Sheely
RDI™ Connections Center (www.rdiconnect.com)*

- ☐ Conflict between parents (about beliefs, methods)
- ☐ Confusion about parent roles
- ☐ Providing stimulation and/or entertainment instead of guidance
- ☐ Difficulty setting clear limits
- ☐ Believing that "more is better" rather than recognizing that children must have time to decompress and not be treated as patients or objects
- ☐ Difficulty maintaining mutually appropriate boundaries.
 - This includes respecting the child's physical boundaries by not abruptly grabbing, pulling, tossing an object without warning, or taking other abrupt invasive actions.
 - It also includes not permitting/allowing the child to abruptly invade your physical boundaries.
- ☐ Loss of healthy degree of normal parental entitlement with the child
 - e.g., it's ok to not let go of the child just because they insist that you do so. You must feel like you will be capable to put a stop to any child actions that result in your feeling anxious, overwhelmed or incompetent.
- ☐ Insufficient interpersonal support resources
- ☐ Insufficient caregiver emotional and physical support mechanisms
- ☐ Limited self efficacy
- ☐ Loss of a healthy parent identity
- ☐ Loss of hope or expectations for meaningful long-term progress
- ☐ Inconsistency
- ☐ Disorganization
- ☐ Inability to be fully mentally engaged when with child
- ☐ Inaccurately processing child feedback
- ☐ Anxiety
 - Some parents have never felt calm in the presence of their child. Being with their child is associated with a pervasive increase in parental anxiety. This may also trigger an increase in the child's anxiety and lead to a snowball effect.
- ☐ Detachment - unhealthy grieving response; inability to be fully mentally engaged
- ☐ Dysregulation - cannot manage emotional and physiological reactions to the child's behavior.
- ☐ Lack of emotional differentiation from the child / inability to disassociate from the child's emotional state and behaviors
- ☐ Lack of emotional readiness to tolerate child's initial resistance to change
- ☐ Fear of uncertainty ("rocking the boat")

- ☐ Perpetual crisis
- ☐ Physiologic enmeshment with child's distress
- ☐ Rigidity
- ☐ Inability to accept the child's actual developmental limitations
- ☐ Unconscious or deliberate over-compensation to hide limitations
- ☐ Loss of primary parent identity as a guide, substituted by unhealthy identities (such as *service procurer*, or *full time advocate*)
- ☐ Over-dependence on professionals
- ☐ Over-focus on superficial symptoms, so that the child can, at first glance, be perceived as more normal
- ☐ Over-investment in short-term, low-level progress indicators
- ☐ Over-reacting to child's withdrawal, inappropriate, or odd behavior
- ☐ Over-scheduling
- ☐ Overly instrumental - behavioral performance focus
- ☐ Passivity and prompt dependence
- ☐ Not yet prepared for the long haul
- ☐ Rapid pace (actions, communication)
- ☐ Unavailability of reliable child feedback
 - Child fails to provide parents with the ongoing feedback needed for parents to take regulating actions that maintain opportunities for learning within a safe range. Parents require fairly (but not totally) reliable feedback so that they can perceive themselves as being able to safely present new learning opportunities, without facing rejection and withdrawal.
- ☐ Parental Learning and mental health problems (both diagnosed and undiagnosed)
 - ☐ ADHD
 - ☐ Language Processing Disorders and Learning Disabilities
 - ☐ Psychiatric and Substance Abuse Disorders
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

THE QUICK SCAN for CAREGIVERS

Name: _____ Date: _____

Please circle the most appropriate number.

Behavioral Style / Temperament

Motor Activity level:

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
High activity			Average	Low activity		

Impulsivity

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Acts before thinking			Average	Thinks before acting		

Attention Span

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Long			Average	Short		

Initial Reaction

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Slow to warm-up			Average	Quick to Warm-up		

Adaptability

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Very inflexible			Average	Very flexible		

Intensity of Reaction

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Reserved			Average	Dramatic		

Usual Mood

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Pleasant, joyful, relaxed			Neutral	Unpleasant, serious, tense		

Regularity/Predictability

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Low regularity, unpredictable			Average	High regularity, predictable		

Sensory Profile

Hearing Speech

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Tunes-out people talking			Average	Tunes-in to talking		

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Hearing Noise

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Oversensitive	<i>Sounds & noises</i>				Undersensitive	

Vision

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Quick to notice	<i>Visual stimuli</i>				Slow to notice	

Taste

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Oversensitive	<i>Changes in foods, hidden tastes</i>				Undersensitive	

Smell

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Oversensitive	<i>Odors</i>				Undersensitive	

Light Touch

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Oversensitive	<i>Sensitive to light touch, tickling, clothing texture</i>				Undersensitive	

Deep Touch

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Avoids, dislikes	<i>Physically close contact</i>				Seeks, likes	

Movement/Body Position in Space

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Avoids	<i>Moving, spinning through space (swing, seesaw, rides, heights)</i>				Likes	

Internal Body Awareness/Physical Symptoms

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Under-reports	<i>Symptoms of illness, not feeling well</i>				Over-reports	

Skills Profile

Fine Motor

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Difficulty, avoids	<i>Manipulating small objects</i>				Ease, enjoys	

Handwriting

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Difficulty, avoids	<i>Writing with crayons, pencils, markers</i>				Ease, enjoys	

Gross Motor

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Difficulty, avoids	<i>Running, jumping, climbing, playing sports/athletics, dancing</i>				Ease, enjoys	

Speaking

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Difficulty	<i>Putting thoughts into words</i>				Ease	

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Listening

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Difficulty	<i>Understanding spoken communication</i>					Ease

Writing

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Difficulty	<i>Putting thoughts onto paper</i>					Ease

Reading

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Delayed	<i>Reading skills</i>					Advanced

Understanding Spatial Relations

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Poor	<i>Understanding puzzles, shapes, block design, maps</i>					Excellent

Visual Arts

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Poor	<i>Drawing, crafts, painting</i>					Excellent

Music

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Poor	<i>Musical ability</i>					Excellent

Math

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Delayed	<i>Math ability</i>					Advanced

Time Awareness

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Difficulty, inaccuracy	<i>Estimating, pacing</i>					Ease, accuracy

Planning, Organization, and Implementation

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Difficulty	<i>Planning ahead / strategizing / sequencing / preparing</i>					Ease

Social Skills

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
With difficulty, rejected	<i>Makes friends</i>					Easily, popular

Problems with physical health

Hospitalization(s)/ Surgery:

Significant medical problems/ illnesses/ serious injuries/ disorders:

Allergies (food, drug, environmental):

Other Family, Environmental, or Life Stresses

Circle best answer according to current impact:

0= no problem; 1=little; 2=medium; 3=big problem

FAMILY STRESSES

0	1	2	3	Death of partner
0	1	2	3	Death of other family member
0	1	2	3	Death of pet
0	1	2	3	Substance abusing partner
0	1	2	3	Physical or sexual abuse of family member
0	1	2	3	Mental or behavioral disorder of partner or child
0	1	2	3	Physical illness of partner or child
0	1	2	3	Addition of another child
0	1	2	3	Physical separation from child
0	1	2	3	Marital/relationship discord
0	1	2	3	Separation/ divorce
0	1	2	3	Dating
0	1	2	3	Re-marriage
0	1	2	3	Blended family
0	1	2	3	Domestic violence
0	1	2	3	Change in primary caregiver
0	1	2	3	Does not speak language of the community
0	1	2	3	Partner or family member with crime problem
0	1	2	3	Partner or self: under-employed
0	1	2	3	Partner or self working long hours outside the home
0	1	2	3	Lack of support from extended family
0	1	2	3	Taboo subjects (e.g., money, some behaviors, family relationships)
0	1	2	3	Self or partner is illiterate

COMMUNITY STRESSES

0	1	2	3	Adjustment to a new and different culture
0	1	2	3	Social discrimination or isolation of family from community
0	1	2	3	Religious or spiritual problem

INADEQUATE RESOURCES

0	1	2	3	Food insecurity/lack of adequate nutrition
0	1	2	3	Homelessness or uncertain housing
0	1	2	3	Financial instability
0	1	2	3	Lack of adequate health care

ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSES

0	1	2	3	Unsafe neighborhood
0	1	2	3	New school for child
0	1	2	3	Long trip (e.g., vacation)
0	1	2	3	Big celebration (birthday, communion, bar/bat mitzvah, wedding, etc.)
0	1	2	3	Unexpected changes (unannounced change in plans, teacher, etc.)
0	1	2	3	Uncertainty (not knowing what will happen)
0	1	2	3	Dealing with relatives
0	1	2	3	Exposure to upsetting news stories
0	1	2	3	Natural disaster

CHILD'S STRESSES (which can have an impact on you!)

0	1	2	3	Physically or sexually abused
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0	1	2	3	Neglected
0	1	2	3	Physical changes (e.g., weight loss or gain, acne, puberty, etc.)
0	1	2	3	Foster care / institutional care
0	1	2	3	Adoption
0	1	2	3	Witness to violence
0	1	2	3	Chronic, long term, or undiagnosed illness
0	1	2	3	Disability (diagnosed or undiagnosed) (list: _____)
0	1	2	3	Unusual interests and/or different ways of thinking
0	1	2	3	Performance anxiety (sports, music, pleasing parents, etc.)
0	1	2	3	Not enough free time

CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL STRESSES (which can have an impact on you!)

0	1	2	3	Inadequate school facilities
0	1	2	3	New school and/or new teacher (circle)
0	1	2	3	Does not get along with teacher(s)
0	1	2	3	Does not get along with classmates
0	1	2	3	Unexpected change to teacher or classroom (circle)
0	1	2	3	Poor academic performance (Which class(es)? _____)
0	1	2	3	Too much schoolwork
0	1	2	3	Too much homework
0	1	2	3	Undiagnosed/unrecognized/unsupported disability

How Are Your Moods Related To Your Parenting?

Use the mood rating scale to track your mood each day. At roughly the same time each day write the date, and then indicate your primary emotion in the box above. Emotions might include things like: Happy, Excited, Grateful, Content, Hopeful, Proud, Concerned, Fulfilled, Sad, Depressed, Guilty, Ashamed, Angry, Irritated, Annoyed, Resentful, Frustrated, Anxious, Worried, Afraid, Nervous, Panicked, Inferior, Inadequate, Lonely, Hopeless, Discouraged, Disappointed, Embarrassed, Powerless, etc.

Rate how you feel that day by circling the appropriate number:

- 1 = the **worst** you have ever felt
- 3 = **neutral**, neither good nor bad
- 5 = the **best** you've ever felt

Connect the circles to see how your mood is changing over time.

In the top box, use the same 1-5 scale to indicate how you felt about your parenting that day, where:

- 1 = the **worst** day you have ever had as a parent
- 3 = **neutral**, an okay parenting day, but nothing outstanding
- 5 = you were the **ideal** parent

Parenting?	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mood Rating	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Primary Emotion							
Date							
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun

Parenting?	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mood Rating	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Primary Emotion							
Date							

Adapted from *Control Your Depression* by Peter Lewinsohn, Ricardo Muñoz, Mary Ann Youngren, & Antoinette Zeiss, and *The Feeling Good Handbook* by David Burns, M.D.

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	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Parenting?	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mood Rating	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Primary Emotion							
Date							
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun

Parenting?	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mood Rating	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Primary Emotion							
Date							
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun

Parenting?	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mood Rating	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Primary Emotion							
Date							
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun

Adapted from *Control Your Depression* by Peter Lewinsohn, Ricardo Muñoz, Mary Ann Youngren, & Antoinette Zeiss, and *The Feeling Good Handbook* by David Burns, M.D.

YOUR THOUGHTS AND YOUR FEELINGS	
Emotion	Thoughts that lead to this emotion
Sadness or depression	Thoughts of loss: you learn a child has a difference or a disability, you suffer a romantic rejection, you lose a loved one, or a job, or you fail to achieve an important goal, etc.
Guilt or shame	You believe that you've hurt someone or that you've failed to live up to your own moral standards. Guilt results from self-condemnation ("My child is this way because of my parenting") whereas shame involves the fear that you'll lose face when others find out about your child's or your own shortcomings ("My community will think I'm a terrible parent if they see my child behaving this way").
Anger, irritation, annoyance, or resentment	You feel that someone is treating you unfairly ("That teacher doesn't understand") or trying to take advantage of you ("That doctor is making things sound worse than they are because they just want my money").
Frustration	Life falls short of your expectations. You insist that things should be different. It might be your own performance ("I shouldn't have done that."), what someone else does ("He should have been on time" or "Why does my child behave this way?"), or an event ("Why does my child lose it when I'm in a hurry?").
Anxiety, worry, fear, nervousness, or panic	You believe you are in danger because you think something bad is about to happen ("What if the plane crashes?" "What if my mind goes blank when I give my talk in front of all those people?" "What if this chest pain is the start of a heart attack?" "What if my child never learns this important skill?")
Inferiority or inadequacy	You compare yourself (or your children) to others and conclude that you (or your children) are not as good as they are because you (or they) are not as talented, attractive, charming, successful, or intelligent. "She's really got what it takes. Too bad my child doesn't." "He's got perfect manners. Mine eats like a pig."
Loneliness	You tell yourself that you are bound to feel unhappy because you are alone and you aren't getting enough love and attention from others. ("No one wants to be with our family because of the way my kids are.")
Hopelessness or discouragement	You feel convinced that your problems will go on forever and that things will never improve. ("I'll never feel happy again," or "I'll never be able to find a good job," or "My child will be never be independent.")

Cognitive Distortions

1. **ALL-OR-NONE THINKING** (also known as BLACK & WHITE THINKING): You think in extremes – things are either perfect or a failure; there is no middle ground and no room for mistakes. If your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure.
2. **OVERGENERALIZATION**: You reach a general conclusion based on a single incident or piece of evidence. You exaggerate the frequency of problems and use negative global labels like “always” or “never”. You think that because something happened once it will always happen the same way.
3. **MENTAL FILTERS**: You focus on the negative details while ignoring all the positive aspects of a situation. You may even feel the positive “doesn’t count”.
4. **CATASTROPHIZING**: You expect, even visualize disaster. You notice or hear about a problem and think, "What if [the worst thing] happens?" You inappropriately exaggerate the importance of things. You may feel like you cannot handle it if the worst thing *does* happen.
5. **MAGNIFYING**: You make a problem more important and worse than it really is by exaggerating its degree or intensity.
6. **SHOULD**s: You have a lot of rules about how you and other people should act. You feel guilty when you violate the rules, and people who break the rules anger you. You use words like “should”, “must”, and “ought to”, as if you need the threat of punishment before you can be expected to do anything. The emotional consequence is guilt.
7. **PERSONALIZATION OR BLAME**: You see yourself as the cause of a negative event or someone's reaction when, in fact, it had nothing to do with you. Another distortion is when you blame other people or their circumstances, while overlooking your own contributions to the situation.
8. **MIND READING**: You think you know how other people are feeling, why they act the way they do, and what they are thinking about you, in particular. You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you, and you don't check the assumption out.
9. **FORTUNE-TELLING**: You predict that things will turn out badly.
10. **EMOTIONAL REASONING**: You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: "I feel like I'm going to die, therefore it must be true."
11. **MISLABELING**: This is an extreme form of overgeneralization. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself. "I am a loser." When someone else's behavior rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label to him or her.
12. **SELECTIVE ATTENTION & SELECTIVE MEMORY**: When you pay attention to information that confirms your beliefs, but ignore evidence that may counter your interpretations. Selective memory is when you only remember certain pieces of information that confirm what you believe.

Adapted from *The Feeling Good Handbook* by David Burns, M.D. and *Anxiety-Free Kids* by Bonnie Zucker, Psy.D.

Thoughts

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Feelings
&
Emotions

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Behaviors

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Body

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

EVENT _____

Thoughts (from previous page)

Cognitive Distortion? Which one?

• _____	_____
• _____	_____
• _____	_____
• _____	_____
• _____	_____
• _____	_____
• _____	_____
• _____	_____

Replacement Thoughts

• _____
• _____
• _____
• _____
• _____
• _____
• _____
• _____

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