



Ascension

Ascension WI EAP

## My kids are driving me crazy!

### How to control your anger and prevent child abuse.

**Recognize these are stressful times.** Changes in work and school, new expectations for parents to be teachers and constant caregivers, being physically close to family all day and night, and the fears about finances and illness weigh heavily on us. Recognize you are stressed and so are your kids. Pay attention to your emotional reactions. Know when you are getting worked up or feeling frazzled. Are your ears getting hot, heart pounding, jaw clenching, fists tightening, and feeling like you're about to explode? What are your "tells" that you are mad?

**Have realistic expectations.** You cannot be a full time caregiver, employee, and teacher all at once. Your child is not going to be cooperative with schoolwork, or keeping themselves busy, or having good behavior all the time. Take it easy with yourself and your children. Take and allow frequent breaks. Look for big picture goals and do the best you can today.

**Take time away from the children.** Your best option would be to take a drive or a walk outside by yourself. If you can't physically leave your home and children, take some time alone in your bedroom/bathroom/closet/car to phone a friend or read a book. Get rest when you can. Pick your battles. Make sure the really important rules are clear to children and are enforced by you. It is important for you to feel that your home

is ordered, but don't rule like a dictator. Enforce that your children are listening to you, and you to them. Let small irritations go.

**Take care of frustration and anger in a healthy way.** Physical exercise is best to release stress. Watch a comedy show. Listen to some upbeat music. It is also good to talk to an adult (out of child earshot) about your frustrations. Who are your supports? Who can you talk to when you are upset about your spouse, kids, work? Get help when you need it. Call a crisis phone line, connect with your Employee Assistance Program, or seek counseling options.

**Walk away when you feel like you will not be able to control your anger.** Even for 3 minutes. Breathe and take a pause. It is NOT okay to vent to a child. It is not okay to take out anger in a violent way on people or even around people (shouting insults, hitting walls, slamming doors, breaking things). Words and yelling are often more harmful than physical abuse, which is never okay.

**Focus on the positive.** There are good aspects of every situation. Look for what your child is doing RIGHT rather than wrong. Look for what you have done WELL today, not all that you didn't get done or done as well as you would like. Find the silver lining in everything.