

**Take-Aways from "Kids & Stress"**  
**Be a Part of the Conversation**  
by Dr. Janet Sasson Edgette

- For most kids, grades are the #1 stressor.
- Other stressors include: keeping up with social media; over-scheduling; "battle" fatigue/ insufficient sleep; unrelenting competition (school, sports, social standing); feeling judged by peers; family disconnect; seeing parents stressed.
- Three ways to help: Reduce stress. Increase resilience. Leverage your relationship.
- Emerging research: Students in high-achieving schools are experiencing higher rates of behavioral and mental health problems compared with national norms.
- Are our children even enjoying learning anymore? Let's ask them.
- Let's take a moment to look at ourselves and the values we're projecting. What are the messages we want to send our kids besides, '*Grades are important*' ?
- Good grades won't protect our children from stress, but traits that build up resilience can.
- Many of the traits that build resilience are not captured in grades, for example, managing strong emotions, perspective-taking, expressing oneself in ways others will want to hear, being coachable, ability to self-reflect, interpersonal self-control, compassion.
- Some stressors we could "get rid of" but shouldn't: losing; failing; not being the best; not even being good; constructive criticism/feedback; being rejected.
- Start having real conversations with your children when they are young. You'll be developing a template for talking about more difficult topics down the road.
- As your kids get older, don't dismiss risky or worrisome behaviors as "kids being kids."
- Don't assume that a lack of connection/communication between you and your kids is "typical preteen/teen behavior." Ask: *What needs to happen in order for us to be able to talk again?*
- If you have concerns, see if you can bring it up in a way that expresses a wish to address them from the same side of the fence.
- And when talking, remember: fewer questions; more listening; don't try to fix; *ask*, don't pass judgment about things that don't make sense to you or that you think are unreasonable.
- Parenting - a relationship, not a job.