

Stuff for kids of
parents who are
studying:

How can I help?



Mum gets *really* stressed ...

Sometimes when Mum or Dad is studying at uni, they can get really stressed out, especially when they have to do assignments or study for exams. This is what some of our 'expert' kids-of-studying-parents said. Let's hear from Sam (14), Jasmine (15), Chris (16), Katie (17) and Nat (11) about what they noticed:

Sam: "... mum can get stressed when she doesn't have much time to do everything. When she has an assignment due and she hasn't finished it yet she gets a bit cranky. This makes me feel a bit unhappy because things are stressful."

Jasmine: "My mum has less time for us during her semesters ... it is difficult to stay quiet and this stresses her out at times"

Katie: "My mother is incredibly busy with her studies and commits a lot of her time to completing the amount of work required"

Christopher: "I didn't think it would be that hard ... but as I've seen ... all the hard work and the dedication ... I'm like "Oh man, you do have to work hard!"

How can kids help?

Maybe there are some things you can do to help. Even small things can make a big difference ... here are some things that other kids whose parents are studying have tried and found helpful:

Offering to do something practical to help when you can see they are really busy with their studies, such as

- stacking or unstacking the dishwasher
- bringing in the washing or hanging it out
- feeding the pets (if you have any)
- anything else you can think of that will help Mum or Dad out when they are really busy

Any parent LOVES this kind of help from their kids and they will be a bit less stressed straight away!

Also, some kids like to do their homework alongside Mum or Dad while they are studying – it gets the homework done as well as letting Mum or Dad know that you are on their side

Stuff you can do to help your Mum or Dad when they are studying

We don't have as much money now ...

Sometimes, if your Mum or Dad has had to cut down their hours of paid work to have time for their studies, there might be a bit less money in the family for a while, as Jasmine shared, *"we have less money now because she cut back on her work"*. Most kids find that this isn't as bad as you might think. It might mean that there is a bit less money for treats and extras, but you probably already know that money isn't *everything*. Also, studying usually leads to better jobs with better pay, so having a bit less money now is sure to pay off in the long run.

So, how might you be able to help? Here are some ideas that other kids have tried:
Show Mum and Dad how resourceful you are by:

- saving your own 'pocket' money (or birthday/Christmas money) to put towards the things you really want
- if you're old enough, talking with them about getting some part-time work
- if there is something you'd really like to have that you can't afford, checking whether you can get it second-hand, maybe from second-hand stores or through the internet. Second-hand stuff can be much more interesting than new stuff!



Ask Dad ...

... or Mum – whoever's not studying – sometimes you ask the same parent just out of habit. So you can be pleased to know that your other parent (or grandparent, aunt, uncle, older sibling etc) may actually know the answer to your question, so ask them! Here's what Katie and Nat said:

"My father is a lot more involved with us children ..."

".. [Mum] said "talk to the hand" sometimes because she's working really hard"

Little things ...

... can make a BIG difference. Here's a few ideas, but you might be able to think of more:

- Take your studying Mum or Dad a drink of water or something to eat
- Ask them how they're going, or how they're feeling
- Tell them if you are feeling unhappy because of the stress (they don't really mean for *their* stress to make you unhappy)

You could even give them some advice like Nat did. After all, you know what being a student is like too! *"... sometimes when she's calm, right, I just say "Use a simple word and just write it all the time ... just write 500 words of blah, blah, blah" ... go with the flow"*

It's not stress *all* the time

Even though there will be times that are more stressful than others, you will probably find that there is a change in your studying Mum or Dad, as they feel better about themselves and their goals, and as they become more confident. Here's what Sam and Nat observed:

"Mum is more excited because studying means she can have a different job that she will enjoy. That makes her happy. This makes me feel relieved and happy"

"Well she's been ... more happy and more excited about her studies and learning lots and lots and lots ..."