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| **ANGER**  **WHAT IS ANGER?**  Anger is a way that the body gets ready to act. It’s the way that Mother Nature enables us to assert ourselves in the world. Anger is a normal reaction to stress, but it requires that we learn to deal with the resulting behavior in an acceptable fashion.  **DID YOU KNOW?**  When it comes to marital strife, anger may be gender-specific. In 1990, University of Michigan researchers studied 192 married couples. They found that in households where partners held back angry feelings, the wives had a higher mortality rate than women in relationships where anger was openly expressed. For the men, their wives’ anger had no affect upon their health or longevity.  **HEALTHY VS. UNHEALTHY ANGER**  Most children and adults have feelings of anger from time to time. When anger is expressed in a way that allows us to share our feelings and our opinions calmly, or when anger is expressed in a way that helps us to change a situation or to solve a problem, it is healthy. Anger that is "held in" until the person needs to explode, is unhealthy anger.  **Examples of healthy anger:**  Using words to say "That idea makes me angry because...." OR "It makes me angry when you...."  **Examples of unhealthy anger:**  Fighting, verbal abuse, hitting/biting/kicking, or hurting another person in some way.  **Treating Tantrums**  No parent wants to have a child throw dishes or kick the dog when they become angry. Here are some thoughts on how to help kids express their anger in an acceptable way:   * Set a good example. Parents are the most important teachers for their children. A parent who talks about being angry and tries to solve problems with words is a powerful model for a child! * Tell children that anger is healthy, but the way we show anger is important. Getting upset about being mistreated by a friend on the playground is one thing, but fighting over a toy is another. * Do not allow physical or verbal abuse in the home. Verbal abuse is not useful in expressing anger ("I wish you were dead."). Physical abuse does not help to change angry feelings either.   If your child's anger increases beyond an occasional flare-up, and your talking seems futile, seek help from a professional.  **SIX STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS TO COOL OFF**   1. Redirect your thoughts. Think about something pleasant. 2. Meditate. Relax in a comfortable position. Focus on your breathing. Inhale...exhale...think of something peaceful or quiet. 3. Adopt a pet. Having a pet causes people to take their mind off their own worries. Research shows that having a pet can lower blood pressure, too. 4. Live healthy! Exercise and reduce caffeine, sugar, and high fat foods. 5. Help others. Those people who volunteer in their communities have been found to have better health and feel less angry than those who do not serve as volunteers. 6. Be forgiving. People who forgive others for their negative behaviors can feel less frustrated and angry themselves.   **RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH ANGER IN CHILDREN**  Stress and frustration can cause children to become angry. As anger builds up over time, problems can result for teachers, parents, and for children themselves. Here are some factors that cause children to feel increases in anger:   * Learning problems in school. * Family problems (divorce, illness). * Problems with friends or friendships. * Hyperactivity. * Lack of physical coordination or skills.   **ANGER-RELATED CHECKLIST**  Here are some anger-related behaviors your child may be demonstrating:   * Over-react to simple requests/events. * Changed mood over long period of time. * Drop in school grades. * Social withdrawal. Loss of friends. * Great changes in sleeping or eating patterns. * Moody, irritable, discourteous to others. * Provokes fighting with others. * Loss of interest in physical appearance. * Blames others for their problems.   **WHAT'S A PERSON TO DO?**  What can be done when anger rules our life? Talk to someone. A spouse, another parent, a friend, a minister, or a trained counselor can help us to put into perspective angry feelings or behaviors. Sometimes just talking about what makes us angry (parent and child) can help us to think about solutions to our problems. At other times, physical exercise helps us to relieve our anger. |

[www.Fcs.okstate.edu/parenting/issues/anger.htm](http://www.Fcs.okstate.edu/parenting/issues/anger.htm)