

# Growing Your Sense of Humor Can Benefit Your Health



It may sound too good to be true, but there's actual scientific evidence about the benefits of laughter in reducing stress.

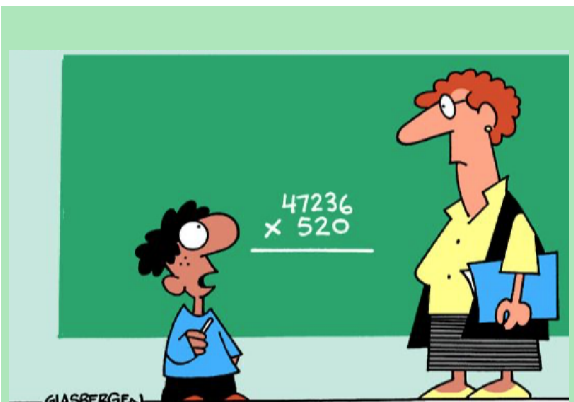
## Did you know that...?

### Laughter in the SHORT term can:

- Improve your intake of air, stimulate your heart, lungs and muscles, and increase endorphins,
- Activate and relieve your stress response, leaving you with a relaxed feeling, and
- Soothe tension by stimulating circulation and helping muscles relax.

### Laughter in the LONG term can:

- Improve your immune system,
- Relieve pain by causing the body to produce its own natural painkillers,
- Make it easier to cope with difficult situations, and
- Improve your mood and your self-esteem.



"Aren't there enough problems in the world already?"



"If you are too busy to laugh, you are too busy."  
--Proverb



"Most children threaten at times to run away from home. This is the only thing that keeps some parents going."  
--Phyllis Diller



"From there to here, from here to there, funny things are everywhere."  
--Dr. Seuss



"Sometimes I laugh so hard, the tears run down my leg."  
--Anonymous

## Having a sense of humor is especially helpful to parents of kids with disabilities.

One of the coping skills that works well for our families is having a sense of *mastery*. *Mastery* means gaining a feeling of control over a threatening event in order to manage it or keep it from occurring again.

When we train ourselves to laugh at ourselves or look for the humor in an awkward or uncomfortable situation, we "lighten up" the situation and it is no longer a threat to us. Laughing in the face of stress is not only a good coping skill, but a gift we give to our children and others.

## To get your funny bone engaged, try these ideas:



Keep funny movies, TV shows, books or videos handy for when you need a boost of humor.



Find something to laugh about with your own mistakes and those of your kids.



Spend time with friends who make you laugh.



Take a funny story to your next IEP meeting and feel the tension melt.

