

PARENTS STRESS OUT CITY KIDS

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EVEN as stress levels among children shoot up, counsellors and psychiatrists in the city confirm that in nine out of 10 cases, parental pressure is to blame.

For years, parents used to emphasise on the importance of education. But today, parents want their children to be good at everything from academics and sports to art and discipline. "Of late, many parents have unrealistic expectations of their children. They want their children to score good marks, win medals in sport and perform well in music and dance. Many demanding parents are not even aware that they might be pressurising their child and causing them serious psychological trauma," says counsellor Meera Ravi.

Malini Iyer, a dance teacher, adds, "I have a few students who are coming to learn dance even though they have absolutely no interest in it. They come here because their parents force them to. I have a student who was initially interested in learning dance, but over time, she has lost all inclination to learn or perform. I spoke to her parents



faced by children is the fact that parents tend to rate their parenting skills based on the performance of their children. "I have had people coming to me with the children to say, 'Nobody encouraged me when I was a kid. Now, my son has great opportunities and all my support, but look at him, he does not realise how lucky he is,'" says

Meera.

Unfortunately for children, parents often try to live their lives through their children. The achievements of the child become the parents' source of recognition. And the latter do not realise the kind of impact such an attitude can have on a young child. "In fact, some parents are not even aware of the fact that they might be pressurising their child. Which is why, in most of my cases I find that it is the parents who require help, not the child. A child who feels he has made his parent unhappy loses his self-esteem to a great extent," reveals Meera.

Even more alarming is the fact that if those children who are subjected to stress and abuse do not get help on time, they tend to become abusive parents in their later years.

COOL DOWN

What could stress out your child:

- ♦ Don't compare children
- ♦ Never ridicule a child
- ♦ Understand the difference between being angry and anger that has been triggered off by some other reason
- ♦ Accept your child for the person he is
- ♦ Never put 'down' your child for his inadequacy
- ♦ Recognise your child's talent and encourage him
- ♦ Keep your expectations realistic

about this, but they refused to believe me. The child is under pressure to continue, as most of the other girls in her family are now performing on stage."

Another cause of stress