

Calming Strategies

There are lots of ways you can help your child learn how to calm down or feel better. Here are some strategies you can use to help learn how to do this:

Details

Activity Games

Talking Games

Positive Talk

Bin It or Box It

Turn it Down, Off or Change the Channel

These strategies work best if you catch your child in the early stages of feeling upset. Try using different strategies for different situations. Practise them a lot so that your child has lots of chances to learn them, and of course give lots of praise for trying and/or succeeding!

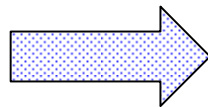


Details

Talk to your child in a calm voice. Describe details of things you can see. It doesn't matter what you notice, and make it as detailed as you like. Add in a simple question now and again. Here is an example:

"The carpet in this room is brown and the TV is on. I can see lots of cartoons on the TV, and your favourite one is coming on soon. The TV is noisy but I can hear sounds from upstairs too. I think your brother is playing his playstation. I can smell our tea cooking. What do you think we are having for tea? The clock on the wall tells me it's 4.30pm. The cat is coming in the room. I wonder where she has been?"

Carry on until you notice that your child is calming down and beginning to listen to you. This is a good strategy to use when your options are limited because you are on a bus, or in a waiting room, or in a shop.

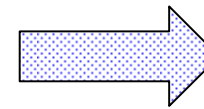


that feels better



Activity Games

Start a play activity and talk in a calm voice about what you are doing. The activity might be playing with toys, drawing, singing, or reading aloud from a picture book. If you are outside, do something physical such as running, jumping or skipping. Wait until you notice that your child is showing interest and then suggest a way she can join in.



Talking Games

If you are out, start counting how many red cars you can see, or how many clouds there are in the sky. At home try naming all the animals you know, or all of the football teams you can think of. Again, once your child notices what you are doing, ask her to join in. There are lots of variations on this which you can make up.

Positive Talk

It's very tempting to focus on how a child is behaving when she is upset or angry. Remember that your child has feelings that she cannot help that are making her behave like this. Instead, try some positive talk. Tell her how pleased you are when she did something good earlier in the day, or remind her about something that she has to look forward to. Tell a joke, or a funny story. Tell her what you think she is good at. Any positive talk will help her and you to feel better. You can talk about the problem later when she is calm.



Bin It or Box It

Name the feeling that your child is showing. Tell her it's OK to feel like that. Then tell



her that she can make the feeling go away if she 'puts' it in a bin, or in a box. Help your child to capture the feeling in her hands and 'bin it' or 'box it'. You could even help your child to decorate a special cardboard box to put feelings 'that don't feel good' into.



Turn it Down, Off or Change Channel

Name the feeling that your child is showing. Tell her it's OK to feel like that. Show her how she can make herself feel better by pretending that she has a volume button that she can turn down slowly. When she gets good at this, you may only have to turn your hand to remind her. You can also pretend she has a button to change channels to help her learn how to switch to thinking about something else that makes her feel good.