

Grounding Exercises for Children

Tools to Help Feel Calm, Safe, and Present

Sometimes big feelings show up during storms, loud noises, or stressful moments. Grounding exercises help our bodies and brains calm down by reminding us that **we are safe right now**.

1. Balloon Breathing

Helps slow the body down

- Put your hands on your belly
- Breathe in through your nose like you're filling a balloon
- Breathe out slowly through your mouth
- Do this 5 times

You can say:

"In... slow and full. Out... slow and gentle."

2. 5-4-3-2-1 Senses Game

Helps bring attention back to the present

Ask the child to name:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste (or a favorite taste)

Take your time, there is no rush.

Material in this handout was enhanced with AI through ChatGPT to improve the visual look and include the most relevant and current information available.



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3. Grounding Hands

Helps kids feel steady and connected

- Press your feet into the floor
- Push your hands together as hard as you can for 5 seconds
- Let go and relax
- Repeat 3 times

You can say:

"Feel how strong your body is."

4. Safe Place Imagination

Helps create emotional safety

- Close your eyes
- Imagine a place where you feel safe and calm
- Notice what you see, hear, and feel there
- You can visit this place anytime you need

Kids can draw their safe place afterward.

5. Temperature Reset

Helps calm strong emotions

- Hold something cool or warm (a cold water bottle, warm mug, or blanket)
- Notice how it feels in your hands
- Take 3 slow breaths

6. Turtle Technique (Great for Younger Kids)

Helps when feelings feel too big

1. Curl into a ball like a turtle

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2. Take 3 slow breaths
3. Stretch arms and legs back out
4. Say: *"I am safe now."*

7. Comfort Words

Helps replace fear with reassurance

Say together:

- "I am safe right now."
- "This feeling will pass."
- "I am not alone."

Important Reminder for Adults

After storms or past trauma, kids' bodies may react before their words do. These exercises are not about stopping feelings, they help kids **move through them safely**. Calm, connection, and repetition make these tools work best.

You can practice these skills on calm days too, so they're easier to use when storms come.

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