

# Grounding Skills for Children

*Helping kids calm their bodies and feel safe in the moment*

Grounding skills help children settle big feelings by bringing their attention back to **their body and the present moment**. These skills are especially helpful during anxiety, overwhelm, anger, or after stressful experiences.

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## Breathing & Body Calmers

**Balloon Belly Breathing** – Put one hand on your belly. Breathe in like you’re filling a balloon. Breathe out slowly like the air is leaving.

**Starfish Breathing** – Trace each finger on your hand. Breathe in as you go up a finger, breathe out as you go down.

**Tense & Release** – Squeeze your hands or shoulders tight for 5 seconds...then let go. Notice how your body feels.

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## Sensory Grounding (Use the 5 Senses) 5–4–3–2–1 Game

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

**Texture Touch** – Hold something comforting (stuffed animal, smooth rock, putty) and describe how it feels.

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## Movement Grounding

**Wall Push** – Put your hands on the wall and push hard for 10 seconds. Release.

**Animal Moves** – Try a bear crawl, stretch like a cat, or curl up like a turtle.

**Jump & Count** – Jump 10 times and count slowly out loud.

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## Calm Thoughts & Imagination

**Safe Place** - Close your eyes and imagine a place where you feel calm and safe. What do you see? Hear? Smell?

**Name 3 Good Things** - Find three things that feel okay or good right now (even small ones).

**Temperature Reset** - Hold an ice cube in a towel, Splash cool water on hands, Wrap up in a warm blanket

**Feelings Check** - "Where do you feel that feeling in your body?" "Is it big or small? Moving or still?"

## Tools for Younger Children (ages ~3-7)

- Sing a familiar song together
- Blow bubbles or pretend bubbles
- Hug a stuffed animal
- Count fingers or toes
- Rock gently side to side

## Helpful Words for Adults

- "Your body is having a big feeling. Let's help it calm down."
- "You're safe right now."
- "We can slow this down together."

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## Tips for Grown-Ups

- Practice these skills **before** a child is upset
- Keep your voice calm and slow
- Let the child choose what works best
- Short and simple is best

*Grounding skills don't make feelings disappear, they help kids feel safe enough to handle them.*