

Helping Children with Autism Navigate Big Feelings

Emotional Regulation Tips for Parents



- ♥ **Notice the Early Signs:** Pacing, covering ears, or withdrawing – step in early before emotions escalate.
- ♥ **Help Your Child Name Feelings:** Use emotion charts, zones of regulation, scales (like the Wave Watch Scale in *How to Surf the Waves* by Tracey DeMaria) or simple words (i.e., “I’m mad”) so emotions are easier to recognize.
- ♥ **Offer Calming Tools:** Fidgets, sensory play tools (like Lakeshore’s Sensory Sand), headphones, weighted pads, or short movement breaks lower stress.
- ♥ **Encourage Creative Outlets:** Drawing, music, or dancing can help children with autism release energy safely.
- ♥ **Create Predictable Routines:** Visual schedules, advance warnings, and timers (like Lakeshore’s Light-Up Countdown Timer) make transitions easier.
- ♥ **Practice Asking for Breaks:** Role-play simple phrases like “I need a break” or use a card your child can hand you.
- ♥ **Model Calm Strategies:** Show deep breathing, stretching, or using a calm corner –they’ll learn by watching you.
- ♥ **Build a Personal Toolbox:** Create a “go-to” kit and pack sensory items, visuals, snacks, and comfort objects for home or outings.
- ♥ **Validate Big Feelings: Say:** “It’s okay to feel mad. Let’s try your tools together.”
- ♥ **If They’re Not Listening:** Children with autism may not respond when dysregulated. Try lowering your voice and giving them some space. Offer tools once calmer.

Behavior Frontiers’ ABA curriculum empowers children with autism to gain lifelong skills that stick, from social to emotional regulation and communication.



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