



Little Kids, Big Feelings

Takeaway Messages

1. Lots of meltdowns have predictable triggers. Be prepared to offer extra support when big feelings get started.
2. Head off a meltdown by talking calmly with your child. Get down to eye-level, empathize, and offer an acceptable choice.
3. If big feelings don't respond to your first efforts, you can best manage the tantrum by staying calm. If needed, move to the quiet corner you have created for your child. Stay nearby and invite calming breaths together.
4. After the storm, praise your child for calming. Talk with them using short phrases and wait for a response before saying more.
5. Offer emotional guidance. Read books about strong feelings and what happens in the story. Do not review your child's tantrum or ask why it happened.
6. Build your child's resilience by engaging your child in conversations, book-reading, and problem-solving about feelings. They help build attention and self-control skills.



7. Build positive routines to promote cooperation. Include songs and rhymes and be sure to show your child how to do it, praising their effort.

8. Avoid punishments for misbehavior. Reward with praise and your positive attention when your child puts in effort and cooperates.

More things you can do to promote your child's resilience, attention and self-control:

- **Pretend play** – join in, ask your child for a role, use puppets, dolls, stuffed animals to recreate a fun event or talk about recent challenging moments
- **Self-regulation** activities like Freeze Dance or Statues, Simon Says
- **Sensory play and exploration** – create an independent play space, a “yes” space in your home. Watch our class – Working from Home: How Can I Help My Child Play More on His Own?
- **Limit screen time** – none before 18 months. No more than 60 minutes for toddlers and preschoolers. Create a routine about how often and for how long.