

De-Escalation & Co-Regulation

A Simple Guide for Supporting Big Emotions at Home

Preparing For Big Emotions

Why This Matters

Children are more likely to use calming tools when they've practiced them while calm. Co-regulation occurs when a parent intentionally manages their own nervous system while supporting their child. Through modeling, guidance, and connection, you help your child shift from dysregulation toward regulation.

Step 1: Prepare Yourself First

Children borrow regulation from adults. Before teaching tools, reflect on your own.

Ask yourself:

- What helps me calm down when I feel overwhelmed?
- Do I step away? Breathe? Move? Call someone? Drink water?

Write down 3-5 tools you use.

Make sure calming tools are easily accessible for both you and your children.

Step 2: Practice While Everyone Is Calm

Spend 5 minutes a day practicing calming tools together.

When children practice while calm:

- They build muscle memory
- They are more likely to seek the tool when upset
- It becomes part of routine rather than punishment

You might say: "We're practicing how our family calms our bodies."

Consider adding this to your daily routine.

Step 3: Set Expectations Ahead of Time

Explain the plan when everyone is calm.

You can say: "When you have big emotions, I will help you feel safe while you calm down. I won't let you hurt me or use disrespectful words."

Keep it simple. Repeat it consistently.