

Parenting Strategy for Meltdowns

1. Take a Belly Breath Yourself

- Remember to inflate your belly like a balloon.
- Breathe in *slowly*.
- Stop at the top.
- Breathe out...do this a couple of times until you feel calm enough.

2. Non-threatening posture:

- Before you do anything, kneel down or position yourself so that you are *slightly below the child's eye level*, if you can.
- If the child is being aggressive, you can do this from a safe distance.

3. Empathy and Validation

- You seem _____ (furious, scared, annoyed, hurt, worried, etc.).
- Given what happened, I can see why you might feel that way
- I might feel that way, too, if I were in your shoes.

4. Opportunity

- How do you want to help yourself feel better right now?
- Do you want a hug? (This doesn't have to be verbal.)
- Do you want some help with your strategies?
- Can I help you ... (calm down, take some belly breaths, etc.)?

5. Modeling

- I'm feeling _____.
- I think I'm going to _____ (breathe, do a body check, take space, think things over, refocus, etc.)
- I don't know about you, but I'd love a hug right now.
- Can you help me with my strategies?

6. Disengage (if not in actual crisis, but unwilling to help self or take help)

- It seems like you might need some time.
- I'll check back with you in ____ minutes (and do).

Parents...

Keep in mind, meltdowns happen – sometimes when we're prepared to handle it, comfortable, and totally on the ball. At other times, we're blindsided and confused, possibly embarrassed and feeling completely helpless.

It happens.

And sometimes, we may not be able to do much about it.

And that's OKAY. Just take that belly breath, and do your best.

Also keep in mind that when we're in public, we may allow feelings of shame and embarrassment to override our generally good parenting instincts.

Again, just remind yourself that you're a "good enough" parent*, and do your best.

(*My evidence of that is that you're taking the time to read this.)