

# CALM DOWN STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

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## **Developing healthy ways to calm down gives parents and children tools to manage their feelings.**

When parents and those in a parenting role take their own break to calm down, they model emotional regulation.

When children identify and practice calm down strategies, they are more likely to use them when big feelings arise.

Once calm, parents and children are able to communicate in healthy ways, strengthen relationships, and solve problems together.

## **Calm Down Strategies for Parents**

- Identify and name your feelings
- Move your body (go for a walk, dance, exercise, stretch)
- Get outside
- Briefly engage your brain with something else (Listen to calming music or watch a favorite show)
- Play a game
- Read a book or magazine
- Draw or paint
- Write in a journal
- Practice deep breathing
- Try guided meditation
- Close your eyes for a few minutes and imagine your favorite place
- Breathe in/diffuse essential oils (lavender, chamomile, etc.)
- Get a drink of water or make a cup of tea
- Spend time with a pet
- Use positive self-talk (*"I've got this..." "It's going to work out."*)
- Take a shower or bath
- Call a friend or family member



# Calm Down Strategies for Children

- Identify and name your feelings
- Move your body (take a walk, dance, play, exercise)
- Get outside
- Listen to soothing music or watch a favorite show
- Play a game, build something, or play with a favorite toy
- Read a book or magazine
- Draw, color, or paint
- Write in a journal
- Practice Hot Chocolate Breathing: Pretend to hold a hot cup of cocoa in front of you. Deeply breathe in the aroma of the chocolate. Then blow out to cool it. Do this to the count of five to practice.
- Practice Strange Calm: Switch into slow motion. Use the burst of energy to become extremely slow and intentional about using your body.
- Close your eyes for a few minutes and imagine your favorite place
- Get a drink of water
- Hug a person, pillow, or stuffed animal
- Play with a pet
- Use positive self-talk (*"I've got this..."* *"It's going to work out."*)
- Call a friend or family member

Ask your child: *"What makes you feel better when you need to calm down?"* Remind them of their preferred strategies when big feelings arise.

Ask for help when you need it. Don't hesitate to speak with a mental health professional or your primary care doctor for more resources.

**Learn more at [ParentingMontana.org](https://ParentingMontana.org)**

