

PARENT GUIDE

MY CALM BODY AND MIND



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01

Supporting Your Child's Emotional Calm, Confidence, and Connection

This guide is designed to be used in conjunction with the “My Calm Mind and Body Workbook.” The guide offers step-by-step guidance on how to create space for the “big feelings” when children need help regulating their emotions. The guide offers clear, compassionate, and culturally grounded strategies to support caregivers in teaching children coping skills that they can use throughout childhood and beyond. The guide provides simple steps that help caregivers help children feel safer, more connected, and emotionally steady during moments of uncertainty.

Inside the guide, you'll find:

- Guidance on engaging children in Grounding and breathing techniques to calm the body.
- Gentle check-in prompts for supporting children.
- Tools for strengthening family communication and connection
- Guidance for helping children manage overwhelming emotions.

Support that feels familiar. Support that honors who we are.

The Parenting Guide was created to help caregivers help children manage big feelings with confidence and calm. The guide offers simple, culturally grounded strategies for co-regulation, emotional support, and everyday coping to help families strengthen connections, communication, and resilience.



Children develop emotional regulation skills through their interactions with caregivers. Your calm, steady presence is a primary regulatory tool. The strategies outlined are designed to support children in achieving a sense of safety, emotional understanding, and physiological regulation, particularly following stressful or distressing events. Before a caregiver begin the process of helping the child regulate their emotion it is important that the caregiver first regulate themselves. Approach the child when you are calm and have the emotional bandwidth to create space for the child's emotions.

02

**Some Guideline: Helping the
Child's Body Calm Before
Problem Solving**

The body is the doorway to a calm mind.

Why this matters:

Children cannot reason or talk about feelings until the body settles first. Physical calming need to occur before problem-solving begin.

Some Helpful Tools



Breathing exercise
to relax the body



Cold water on
hands or face
(for grounding)



Stretching arms up
like a big yawn
resets the body



Holding a stuffed toy or pillow
provides comfort and ground
the child



Rocking gently side to side
soothes the body and help to calm
the nervous system

Some helpful statements:

What to say.

- “Let us slow our bodies together.”
Or
- “Your body is telling you it needs a break.”

Key factors to consider before you attempt to help the child:

It is important and necessary to keep the tools simple and repetitive

Why?

Children benefit from:

- Nice slow and steady pace - teach only one skill at a time.
- Keep the steps short - ***between three to five seconds.***
- Visual cues serve as a distraction from “big feelings” and allows to brain to take a break and the body to begin to reset.
- Use visual support like pictures and icons to provide the child with alternate options for expressing feelings when they are unable to use their words.

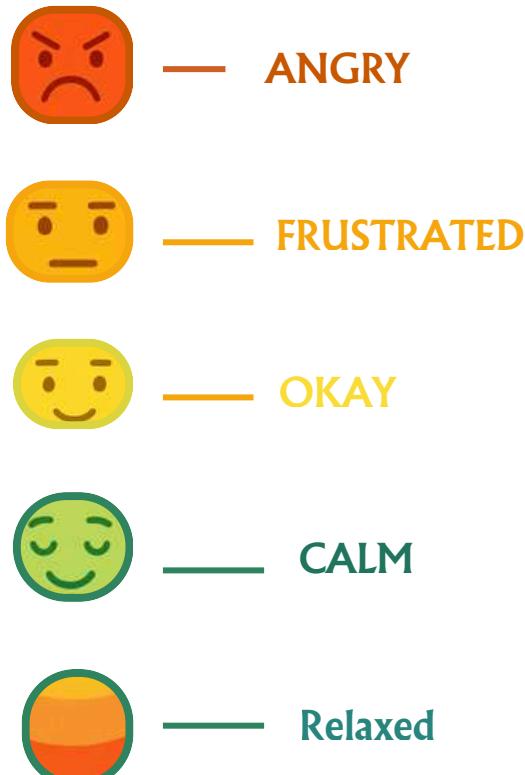
***Repeat skills on calm days to promote mastery
so the skills are easier on tough days.***

03

Taking Emotional Temperature

Use as a Pause Button During Big Feelings

EMOTIONAL THERMOMETER



- When your child is overwhelmed, gently pause the moment:

“Let’s check your emotional temperature before we decide what to do next.”

- Naming the level (“cool,” “warm,” “hot”) by matching it with the emotion helps slow the nervous system and creates space between the feeling and the behavior.

Pair Each Temperature With a Coping Choice

Help your child learn **what helps at each level**:

- Cool → keep going, enjoy, stay connected
- Warm → take a breath, ask for help, take a break
- Hot → step away, deep breathing, hug, quiet space

This teaches children that feelings give information, not commands.

Model It Out Loud as a Parent

Children learn regulation by watching you.

- Say things like:

“My emotional temperature is getting warm, so I’m going to take a few slow breaths.”

- This normalizes emotions and shows that everyone uses tools—not just kids.

Reflect Together After the Moment Has Passed

- Once your child is calm:

Gently talk it through:

“What did your emotional temperature feel like earlier?”

“What helped bring it down?”

- Reflection builds emotional memory and confidence for next time.*

Keep It Visual and Playful

- Use colors, thermometers, faces, or body cues (“tight fists,” “fast heart”).
- Younger children especially benefit from seeing emotions rather than only talking about them.

Reassure: All Temperatures Are Okay

Remind your child:

- “There’s nothing wrong with having a hot emotional temperature. We just need to help your body cool down.”*

This reduces shame and reinforces emotional safety.

04

Co-Regulate First

Children calm best when adults show them

Why this matters:

Children borrow adults' nervous systems. When you breathe slowly, soften your voice, or sit nearby, the child's body will naturally begin to settle.

First Step:

Sit beside (not above) the child

Offer choices to give them control:

Ask the child:

- “Do you want to sit or stand?”
- “Would you like water or a deep breath?”



Phrases that communicate to the child that you can help:

- “I am here with you.”
- “Let us calm together.”
- “Your feelings make sense.”

Next: Validate the child's experience and emotions before teaching skills.

Say things like:

- “Your mind feels busy right now.”
- “That was a lot for you.”

Then: Begin slow breathing together.

Say things like:

- “Let’s smell a flower...” inhale
- “now blow bubbles...” exhale

***Validation reduces distress before problem solving begin.**

05

Name the Feeling Together

Naming the feeling reduces its power

SOME COMMON FEELINGS



Angry



Happy



Sad



Surprised

Why this matters:

Once a child can name what they feel, their brain begins to settle.

Steps:

Guess gently:

“It looks like your mind feels busy.”

“Your face says you might be worried.”

Validate:

“You are not in trouble.”

“it is okay to feel that way.”

Note: Avoid over-explaining or asking too many questions when the child is overwhelmed.

Optional tool: Use the *Children’s Feelings Card*
to help the child point instead of talk.

06

Use Quiet Thoughts to Support the Child

Calm thoughts helps the mind

Teach simple thoughts the child can repeat:

“I can take my time.”

“I don’t have to know everything right now.”

“My body and mind can calm together.”

“I am safe.”

“I can ask for help.”



How to guide the child:

Say: “Lets pick one quiet thought to tell your mind today.”

Remember: Model the thought yourself first.

07

Encourage Creative Expression

Drawing helps children express what words cannot

Why it matters:

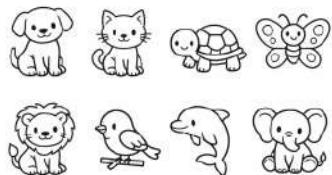
Children often feel calmer after drawing something familiar, comforting, or safe.

Use a blank sheet of paper and invite the child to draw images of things that help them calm down.”



Invite the child to draw:

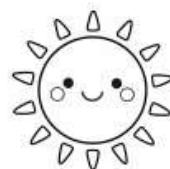
*Their favorite animal



*Someone they love



*The sun



*A slow animal



*The moon and stars



*A cozy place



Note:

Do not choose for the child. Allowing the child to choose gives them a sense of control.

Phrases that support creativity:

- “Show me what helps your mind feel peaceful.”
- “I love how you express your mind.”

08

**Build a
“Calm Mind Toolkit”**

A small set of helpful tools children can choose from

Why it matters:

Choice empowers children and prevents them from becoming emotional overwhelmed.

Toolkit ideas:

- Breathing bubbles
- Coloring book
- Counting to 10
- Soft music or headphones
- A comforting object
- Drawing pages
- Water bottles
- A small notebook
- Feelings chart
- Helpful phrases card



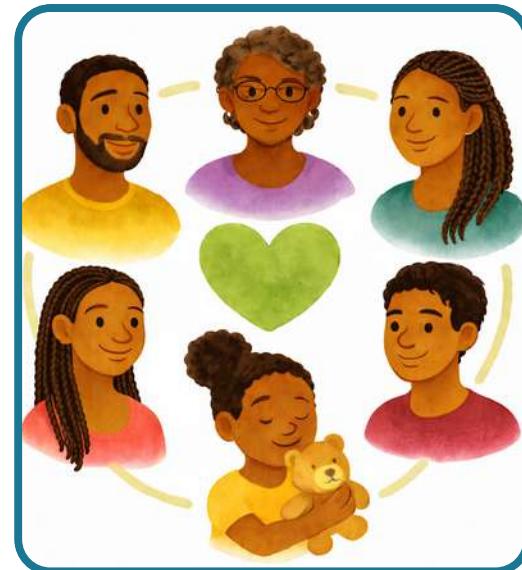
09

Support Circle - Who Can Help Me?

Children feel safer when they know who their helpers are

Use the worksheet to help the child identify people who can support them when their feelings get too big. Example:

- A caregiver
- A grandparent
- A teacher
- A neighbor
- A counselor
- A grandparent
- A friend



Parent tip:

Practice identifying helpers on calm days so the child remember during stressful moments.

10

After the Feeling Passes

Connection comes after calm returns

Guide your child to reflect gently:

- “What helped your mind calm today?”
- “Next time your mind is busy, what could we try first?”
- “Is there something you want me to know?”



Celebrate the progress:

- “You were brave.”
- “You calmed your body.”
- “You did something hard.”

Guide, Do Not Force:

- Avoid statement like:
 - “calm down right now.”
 - “Stop crying.”

Such statements invalidate the child's feelings and sends a message that emotions are to be feared.

Instead try:

- "Let's do this together."
- "Try one breath with me."

These worksheet can help:

- Name emotions (use the feelings chart)
- Star stretch
- Balloon belly breathing
- My feelings today check-in
- Shake it out

Tools can be used:

- Before stressful moments
- After big feelings
- After-school time
- Bedtime
- Transitions

11

Conclusion

Teaching a child how to calm their body and mind takes time. These skills will be learned over time, not in one moment. Because your presence, patience, and connection are the greatest tools your child will ever have, it is important that you use them effectively. When using the skills, be mindful of your process.



My Calm Mind Tools

Check the ones you want to use today:

Visit our Kids Corner at Bahali.org for additional resources