HELP FOR PARENTS IN CALMING BIG FEELINGS IN YOUNG CHILDREN

Do you find yourself grabbing a tablet, your phone, turning the TV on, or giving your child whatever they want just to get them to settle down when they are upset or angry? Try these alternatives instead.

MAD, ANGRY, EXPLOSIVE

▶ Screaming, crying, hitting, biting, pushing

- Roll up in a ball
- Exercise: push the wall, jumping jacks
- Listen to calming music, familiar songs, or stories
- Squeeze a stuffed animal or pillow

UPSET, FRUSTRATED, OPPOSITIONAL

▶ Shutdown, refusing, arguing, complaining

- Breathe: belly breathing, square breathing
- Exercise: jumping jacks, push the wall
- Squeeze a squishy ball or toy
- Draw, color, or count out loud

SCARED, ANXIOUS, UNSETTLED, TENSE

▶ Clingy, avoiding, crying, worrying, nervous

- Breathe: take a deep breath in through the nose and then slowly blow out a pretend candle
- Assign a helper task
- Draw a silly picture
- Listen to music
- Do a wiggle dance, pretend to shake it off
- Hug a stuffed animal or blanket

SAD, BORED

▶ Withdrawn, crying, low interest, low energy

- Assign a helper task
- Draw or color
- Build with blocks
- Look at a book
- Walk or skip around the room
- Play with another child or a caregiver

HAPPY, CALM, CONTENT

▶ Engaged, calm, smiling

- Sing or listen to songs
- Draw or color
- Skip
- Play with toys
- Help a friend
- Try something new

YOU helping your child calm teaches important life skills and builds important bonds. Just like big people, our little ones just need help sometimes!

WISCONSIN OFFICE OF Children's Mental Health

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