

# Emotional Regulation & Meltdowns

## in Autism

Understanding big emotions, navigating sensory challenges, and supporting your child with confidence.

**FutureForAutism.org**

Practical Guidance • Compassionate Support





## Important Disclaimer

This guide is for educational purposes only and does not replace professional medical, psychological, or therapeutic advice. Every child is unique, and strategies should be adapted to individual needs. If your child experiences severe emotional or behavioral challenges that pose a risk to safety, please consult a qualified professional immediately.

# If You're Here, You're Not Alone



### Meltdowns are exhausting

They can leave both you and your child feeling drained and fragile.



### They can feel confusing

It's normal to feel overwhelmed trying to decode what happened.



### They are NOT a sign of failure

Struggling with regulation does not mean you are failing as a parent.

“

"Meltdowns are not manipulation. They are a stress response."

— A Core Truth



We're here to help you understand the 'why' behind the behavior.

# What Is Emotional Regulation?

## Simple Definition

Emotional regulation is the ability to **notice feelings**, manage stress reactions, and return to a state of balance after being upset or excited.

## Brain Basics (Parent-Friendly)

 **Fast-Acting Stress System** When overloaded, the brain's "alarm system" (amygdala) reacts instantly, bypassing the "thinking brain" (prefrontal cortex).

 **Skills Grow Over Time** Regulation is a skill set that develops with support (co-regulation), practice, and a sense of safety—not just willpower.

## Why It's Harder for Autistic Brains



### Intense Sensory Experiences

Lights, sounds, or textures can feel painful or overwhelming, filling the "stress bucket" much faster than for neurotypical children.



### Processing & Communication Load

Trying to process language and express needs in real-time takes enormous energy, leaving less reserve for emotional control.



### Predictability & Transitions

Unexpected changes can trigger a threat response because the brain relies heavily on patterns and routine for safety.



*Understanding the "why" helps us respond with compassion, not frustration.*

# The Nervous System: Traffic Light Guide

🎯 **Parenting Goal:** Notice **Yellow** signs early and co-regulate back to **Green**.



## Green Light

Regulated & Ready

### What it looks like:

- ✓ Calm body
- ✓ Able to listen
- ✓ Ready to learn

Response

**Connect & Teach**



## Yellow Light

Escalating / Revving

### What it looks like:

- ▶ Fidgety or silly
- ▶ Louder voice
- ▶ Hard to focus

Response

**Support & Redirect**



## Red Light

Meltdown / Overload

### What it looks like:

- ✗ Screaming/Crying
- ✗ Aggression
- ✗ Loss of control

Response

**Safety & Calm**



## Blue Zone

Shutdown / Low Energy

### What it looks like:

- ☾ Withdrawn
- ☾ Tired/Slow
- ☾ Not responding

Response

**Rest & Recover**

# Meltdown vs. Tantrum: The Critical Difference

## Meltdown

Involuntary Stress Response



### Total Loss of Control

The thinking brain is offline. They physically cannot stop.

### Triggered by Overwhelm

Sensory overload, exhaustion, or anxiety (Fight/Flight).

### Reasoning Doesn't Work

Talking or bargaining will likely make it worse.

 **NEEDS: Safety, Calming & Support**

## Tantrum

Goal-Oriented Behavior



### Seeks a Specific Outcome

Wants an item, attention, or to avoid a task.

### Control is Retained

Behavior often stops immediately if the goal is met.

### Watches Reactions

Often checks to see if the behavior is working.

 **NEEDS: Consistent Limits & Teaching**



**Key Takeaway:**

# Common Meltdown Triggers

Understanding what sparks a meltdown is the first step toward prevention. Triggers often stack up throughout the day.



## Sensory Overload

Too much noise, bright lights, strong smells, or uncomfortable clothing textures can rapidly overwhelm the nervous system.



Watch for: Covering ears/eyes, hiding



## Unexpected Changes

Sudden shifts in routine, cancelled plans, or transitions without warning can trigger a threat response in the brain.



Watch for: Repetitive questions, anxiety



## Communication Barriers

Not being understood or unable to find the words to express needs, pain, or feelings leads to intense frustration.



Watch for: Grunting, pointing aggressively



## Fatigue or Hunger

"Hanger," tiredness, thirst, or hidden physical pain lower the threshold for coping with other stressors significantly.



Watch for: Irritability, lower energy



## Social Exhaustion

Masking (trying to fit in) and navigating complex social rules all day at school depletes energy reserves rapidly.



Watch for: Withdrawal after school



## Cumulative Stress

Small stressors (a lost toy, a loud sound, a hard task) stack up until one tiny thing causes an explosion.



Watch for: "The Coke Bottle Effect"

# Recognizing Escalation Stages

Meltdowns rarely happen "out of nowhere." Identifying the middle stage—the "Rumble"—is your best chance to co-regulate before control is lost.



## 1. The Calm

Baseline

### What it looks like:

- ✓ Flexible thinking
- ✓ Engaged in play/tasks
- ✓ Responsive to words
- ✓ Using tools independently

### PARENT ROLE:

Prevent & Connect



## 2. Escalating

The "Rumble"

### Warning Signs:

- ▶ Restlessness or pacing
- ▶ Louder voice / noises
- ▶ Repetitive questions
- ▶ Rigidity ("I NEED it now")
- ▶ Covering ears / Avoidance

### ★ CRITICAL MOMENT:

Intervene immediately. Reduce demands.



## 3. Meltdown

Crisis / Crash

### What it looks like:

- ✗ Total loss of control
- ✗ Screaming, crying
- ✗ Hitting, kicking, biting
- ✗ Bolting / Running away
- ✗ Shutting down completely

### PARENT ROLE:

Ensure Safety & Wait



**Observation Tip:** Every child's "Rumble" signs are unique. One child might get loud, another might go silent. Note *your* child's specific Stage 2 signs.

# During a Meltdown: Immediate Response

Focus on **safety** and **de-escalation**. The goal is to survive the storm, not to teach a lesson.



## Stay Calm

# 01

Your calm is their anchor. Even if you feel panicked inside, keep your body relaxed, face soft, and voice low and steady.



## Reduce Sensory Input

# 02

Dim the lights, turn off music/TV, and move onlookers away. Create a low-stimulation environment to help the brain reset.



## Lower Verbal Demands

# 03

Processing language is hard right now. Use few words or simple gestures. Say things like "I'm here" or "You're safe."



## Provide Safe Space

# 04

Remove dangerous objects. If in public, try to find a quiet corner or return to the car. Block aggression physically but gently if needed.



## Avoid Reasoning

# 05

The logic center of the brain is offline. Do not argue, negotiate, or try to teach a lesson. Save the talking for later.



## Wait It Out

# 06

A meltdown has a natural cycle. Be patient. Monitor for safety and wait for the "storm" to run its course.



Remember: You are keeping them safe while their body loses control. This is an act of care.

# What NOT To Do During a Meltdown

Instinct often tells us to correct behavior, but during a meltdown, typical discipline backfires. Avoid these common pitfalls to prevent escalation.

## Don't Lecture or Reason

The "thinking brain" (cortex) is offline. Logic sounds like noise and increases cognitive load.

→ Wait until calm to talk.

## Don't Threaten or Punish

A meltdown is a panic response, not bad behavior. Threats increase anxiety and extend the crisis.

→ Focus on safety, not compliance.

## Don't Demand Eye Contact

Eye contact can be physically painful during sensory overload. It forces the brain to process too much.

→ Look at their shoulder or floor.

## Don't Crowd Them

Hovering or getting too close can trigger a "fight or flight" reaction. They need physical space to decompress.

→ Step back but stay visible.

## Don't Stop Safe Stimming

Rocking, flapping, or vocalizing are ways the nervous system tries to self-regulate. Stopping it removes their coping tool.

→ Only intervene if self-injurious.

## Don't Take It Personally

"I hate you" or aggression during a meltdown is the stress talking, not your child. It's not a reflection of your parenting.

→ Breathe. This is biology, not malice.



### The Golden Rule

Focus entirely on **restoring safety and calm** now. You can teach skills later when the brain is back online.

# After the Meltdown

The storm has passed, but the nervous system is still fragile. This phase is about **reconnection** and **repair**, not correction.



## Allow Decompression

Energy is depleted. They may need sleep, silence, or a favorite show to reboot. Don't rush back to "normal" activities.



## Reassure Safety

They may feel ashamed or scared by their loss of control. Show them that your relationship is still intact.



## No Punishment

Punishing a meltdown (a panic response) increases anxiety for next time. Save teaching moments for when everyone is fully calm.

## Supportive Scripts to Use

"That was really hard. You're safe now."

"I'm here. I'm not going anywhere."

"We can try again later. No rush."

*\*Low volume, soft tone, minimal eye contact if needed.\**

**Recovery Tip:** Offer a drink of water or a crunchy snack. Chewing and swallowing can help reset the nervous system.

# Reflect & Track Patterns

Use this log to identify triggers and effective strategies. Consistent tracking reveals the "why" behind the behavior.

 **Meltdown Incident Log**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

 **1. Triggers / Rumble**  
  
What happened before?  

☐ Sensory Overload

☐ Change in Routine

☐ Transition Difficulty

☐ Communication Frustration

☐ Biological (Hunger/Tired/Pain)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

 **2. The Meltdown**  
  
Intensity (1-5)  

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

  
Duration: \_\_\_\_\_ mins  

☐ Screaming / Yelling

☐ Physical Aggression

☐ Shutting Down

 **3. Response**  
  
Strategies Used:  

☐ Reduced Language

☐ Sensory Tool / Space

☐ Co-regulation

  
**What helped?**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
**What didn't work?**  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Pro Tip:** Fill this out *after* everyone is calm. Look for patterns over 1-2 weeks.

# Daily Regulation Tools

Proactive strategies help keep the nervous system in the "Green Zone." Consistent use builds long-term resilience.

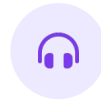


## Predictable Routines

Knowing what comes next reduces anxiety significantly. Visual schedules provide a sense of control and safety.



Try: Visual schedules, "First-Then" boards



## Sensory Breaks

Scheduled downtime to reset. This might mean quiet time, deep pressure, or reducing input before overload happens.



Try: Quiet corner, headphones, weighted blanket



## Movement & Exercise

Proprioceptive input (heavy work) is organizing for the brain. Movement releases energy and regulates mood.



Try: Swinging, jumping, carrying heavy items



## Hydration & Snacks

Stabilizing blood sugar prevents "hangry" meltdowns. Crunching or sucking can also be soothing oral sensory input.



Try: Crunchy snacks, water bottle with straw



## Body Check-ins

Building awareness of body signals (interoception). Helping the child connect physical sensations to emotions.



Try: "How fast is your heart beating?"



## Allow Stimming

Stimming (repetitive movement/noise) is a powerful self-regulation tool. Protect it unless it causes harm.



Try: Providing fidgets, accepting pacing

# Teaching Emotional Vocabulary

Naming emotions helps tame them. Use visuals and body cues to bridge the gap between physical sensation and feeling words.

## Visual Tools

- ✔ **Feelings Charts:** Use faces (emojis or photos) to show range. Start with Happy, Sad, Mad, Scared.
- ✔ **Color Zones:** Link colors to energy levels (e.g., Blue = Low/Sad, Green = Just Right, Red = Out of Control).
- ✔ **Thermometers:** Visual scale from 1 (Calm) to 5 (Exploding) to help rate intensity.

## Connecting Body to Emotion

Teach the physical signs of feelings before the feeling happens:

|                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Sign<br>Tight Fists / Jaw | Emotion<br>Mad / Frustrated |
| Sign<br>Tummy Aches       | Emotion<br>Worried / Scared |

## Simple Scripts

Provide language when they have none. Keep it short:

"I feel \_\_\_\_."  
(mad, sad, tired)

"I need \_\_\_\_."  
(space, help, break, squeeze)

"This is too \_\_\_\_."  
(loud, bright, hard)

## Model Self-Talk

Narrate your own regulation so they see how it works:

“ I am frustrated that I dropped the milk. My shoulders feel tight. I am going to

# Co-Regulation: Borrowed Calm

Children cannot learn to self-regulate without first experiencing co-regulation. You act as their anchor, sharing your calm nervous system with theirs.

## Sit Beside, Not Above

- ✓ **Get Low:** Sit on the floor or a low chair. Towering over a distressed child can trigger a "threat" response.
- ✓ **Side Position:** Sit sideways rather than face-to-face to reduce confrontation intensity.
- ✓ **Respect Space:** Keep a safe distance unless physical comfort is explicitly sought.

## Breathe & Slow Down

Your child's heart rate will often mirror yours. Lead the way to calm:

### Use Fewer Words

Processing language is hard when dysregulated. Use soft sounds or silence.

### Exaggerated Breathing

Take slow, audible deep breaths. Don't ask them to breathe; just do it yourself.

## Offer Simple Choices

Restoring a sense of control can lower anxiety. Offer two safe options:

"Do you want your **headphones** or the **quiet corner**?"

"Would you like a **sip of water** or a **squeeze**?"

## Create a Co-Regulation Kit

Have a dedicated box ready with sensory tools:

 Cold Water

 Noise Defenders

 Weighted Pad

 Fidgets

# Adjusting the Environment

Small adjustments to the sensory environment can significantly reduce the daily load on your child's nervous system.



## Lighting

Fluorescent lights can buzz and flicker invisibly. Use softer bulbs, dimmers, or natural light covers.



Tip: Offer sunglasses or a cap indoors.



## Noise Control

Reduce background noise. Use carpets or soft furnishings to dampen sound echoes in the home.



Tip: Have noise-canceling headphones ready.



## Clothing Comfort

Tactile sensitivity is common. Remove tags, choose seamless socks, and allow soft "comfort clothes" at home.



Tip: Wash new clothes multiple times to soften.



## Seating Options

Provide stability. Use wobble cushions, bean bags, or a corner seat that offers deep pressure support.



Tip: Ensure feet can touch the floor/stool.



## Smells & Air

Strong odors can trigger nausea or headaches. Switch to unscented laundry products and cleaners.



Tip: Use fresh air to reset the senses.



## Create a Calm Corner

A designated safe space (tent, corner with pillows) with low stimulation where your child can retreat anytime.



Tip: Never use this space for punishment.

★ **Goal:** We want to lower the "baseline stress" so there is more room to cope with unexpected challenges.

# Routine & Predictability

Uncertainty triggers the nervous system. Consistent routines and visual cues create a safety net, reducing the need for meltdowns.

## Visual Structure

- ✓ **Visual Schedules**  
Pictures showing the day's flow (Morning → School → Home). Reduces the anxiety of "what comes next?"
- ✓ **First-Then Boards**  
Simple logic for hard tasks: "First [Shoes], Then [Park]." Breaks demands into manageable steps.

## Making Time Concrete

Time is abstract. Make it visible:

 **Tool**  
Visual Timers

Shows red disk vanishing so they "see" time passing.

 **Strategy**  
Countdowns

"5 minutes... 2 minutes... 1 minute left."

## Mastering Transitions

Warning Before Change

Don't surprise them. Use a bell, a song, or a visual card to signal a shift is coming.

Bridge Activities

Carry a preferred item (e.g., a toy car) from Activity A to Activity B to maintain continuity.

## Transition Rituals

Create a micro-routine for the hardest moments of the day:

- 1 **Pack Bag:** Physical signal that we are leaving.
- 2 **Sip Water:** Regulates the body (swallowing calms the vagus nerve).
- 3 **Deep Breath:** Reset before stepping out the door.

# When To Seek Professional Support

You don't have to figure this out alone. Building a support team is a sign of strength, not failure.

## ❗ Signs It's Time to Ask for Help



### Intensity & Frequency

Meltdowns are happening daily or are so intense they impact family life, school attendance, or sleep.



### Safety Concerns

Self-injury (head banging, biting), aggression towards others, or unsafe bolting/running away.



### Regression

Loss of previously learned skills (speech, toileting) or severe withdrawal from social connection.



## Your Potential Support Team



### Occupational Therapy (OT)

Focuses on sensory processing and emotional regulation. Can assess sensory needs and create a "sensory diet."



### Psychologist / Therapist

Provides strategies for anxiety, coping skills, and parent coaching. Look for neurodiversity-affirming providers.



### Speech Pathologist (SLP)

If meltdowns stem from communication frustration, an SLP can help provide alternative ways to express needs.



### Pediatrician

Rule out medical causes like pain, gut issues, or sleep disorders which often trigger behavioral spikes.



### Preparation Tip

Bring your **Tracking Sheets** to appointments. Data helps professionals see the patterns faster.



# Emotional Support for You

Parenting a child with intense emotions is a marathon. Your well-being is not a luxury—it is the **foundation** of your child's stability.



## It's Okay to Feel Tired

Exhaustion, sadness, or feeling overwhelmed are normal responses to high stress. These feelings don't make you a "bad" parent; they make you human.



## Release the Guilt

You did not cause your child's challenges. You are their safe harbor, not the cause of the storm. Let go of the idea that you can "fix" everything instantly.



## Progress is Gradual

Regulation develops slowly. Celebrate the micro-wins—a shorter meltdown, a quicker recovery, or a new word—rather than looking for perfection.

## Your Resilience Toolkit



### Build a Village

Connect with parents who "get it." You need a judgment-free space to vent and share.



### Sustainable Self-Care

Five minutes of silence, a hot coffee, or a short walk counts. Prioritize habits you can actually keep.



### Ask for Respite

Short breaks prevent burnout. It is not selfish to need time away to recharge your batteries.

**Reminder:** You cannot pour from an empty cup. When you regulate your own nervous system, you model regulation for your child.

# Meltdown Tracking Sheet

Documenting the "before, during, and after" helps reveal hidden patterns. Use this sheet to track triggers, early signs, and what strategies are actually working.

 **Incident Log**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

 **1. Before**

**Triggers / Causes**

- ☐ Sensory (Noise/Light/Touch)
- ☐ Unexpected Change
- ☐ Denied Request / "No"
- ☐ Transition
- ☐ Hunger/Fatigue/Pain

**Early Warning Signs**

- ☐ Pacing / Restlessness
- ☐ Louder Voice / Noises
- ☐ Covering Ears/Eyes
- ☐ Repetitive Questioning

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

 **2. During**

**Behaviors Observed**

- ☐ Screaming / Crying
- ☐ Aggression (Hit/Kick/Bite)
- ☐ Self-Injury
- ☐ Dropping / Flopping
- ☐ Elopement (Running)

**Intensity (1-5)**

1

2

3

4

5

**Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ mins

 **3. After**

**Strategies Tried**

- ☐ Reduced Language
- ☐ Decreased Sensory Input
- ☐ Deep Pressure / Touch
- ☐ Gave Space / Time

**Recovery Supports (What helped?)**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Notes**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

 **Pro Tip:** Fill this out once calm. Look for triggers that happen *before* the behavior starts

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# Early Warning Signs Checklist

Recognizing these "Yellow Zone" signs allows you to intervene before a meltdown occurs. Every child's signals are unique.

## My Child's Warning Signals

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Observed: \_\_\_\_\_

### Physical Cues

Body Language & Physiological

- ☐ Faster breathing or heart rate
- ☐ Clenching hands, jaw, or toes
- ☐ Covering ears or eyes
- ☐ Flushed face or sweating
- ☐ Tense shoulders / Stiff body

Unique Physical Sign:

\_\_\_\_\_

### Movement & Sound

Activity Levels

- ☐ Restlessness or Pacing
- ☐ Increased stimming (rocking/flapping)
- ☐ Louder voice / Changing tone
- ☐ Rougher handling of objects
- ☐ Unable to sit still / Fidgeting

Unique Behavioral Sign:

\_\_\_\_\_

### Avoidance

Communication Changes

- ☐ Saying "No!", "Stop!", or refusing
- ☐ Asking to leave / "Go home"
- ☐ Hiding (under tables/furniture)
- ☐ Reduced speech / Not responding
- ☐ Rigidity / Controlling behavior

Unique Avoidance Sign:

\_\_\_\_\_

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 **Pro Tip:** When you see these signs, switch to *co-regulation* immediately. Reduce demands and increase safety.

# My Calm-Down Plan

A personalized guide to support regulation. Fill this out together during a calm moment.

## Personal Regulation Guide

This plan  
belongs to: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### My Signals

*How my body/voice changes when I'm escalating:*

---

---

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### Words / Visuals

*What helps me understand right now:*

---

---

### What Helps First

*Sensory tools, actions, or items:*

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### My Safe Spaces

*Where I can go to feel safe:*

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### People Who Help

*Safe adults I trust:*

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### After-Care Plan

*To recover, I need (quiet, drink, screen):*

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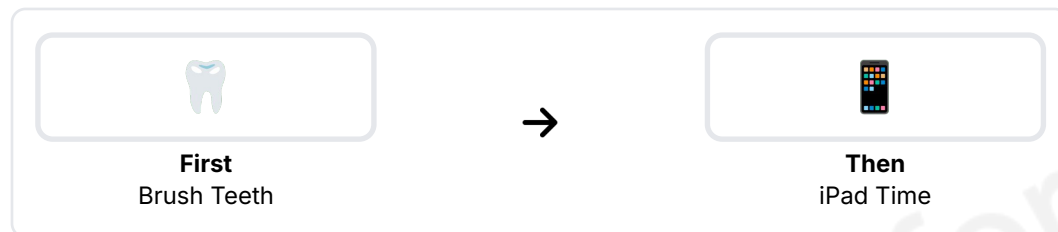
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# Visual Supports That Help

Spoken words disappear instantly, but visuals stay. Use these tools to answer "What is happening?" and "For how long?" to reduce anxiety.

## → First-Then Boards

Simplifies expectations. "First do the hard thing, Then get the good thing."

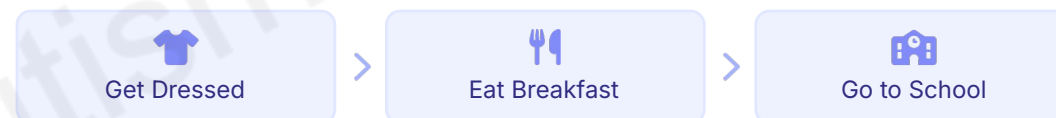


## ⌚ Visual Timers

- ✓ **Make Time Concrete:** Time is abstract. Seeing a red disk disappear or sand fall helps a child understand "how long."
- ✓ **Transition Aid:** "When the red is gone, the TV turns off." Removes the parent as the "bad guy."

## Visual Schedules

A roadmap for routines prevents power struggles. Use pictures or written lists.



## Social Narratives

Short scripts that preview what will happen in new or hard situations.

### **Sample Script: Going to the Store**

*"First we put on shoes. Then we drive in the car. We can listen to music. At the store, we will buy milk. If it is loud, I can put on my headphones. Then we go home."*

# Build a Sensory Toolkit

A sensory toolkit helps regulate the nervous system before a meltdown occurs. Keep tools accessible at home and pack a portable kit for outings.



## Noise Control

Noise-canceling headphones or ear defenders to block overwhelming sounds in busy environments.



Best for: Home & On-the-Go



## Visual Regulation

Dimmer switches and soft lamps at home; sunglasses or a hat with a brim for bright stores.



Primary Focus: Environment



## Deep Pressure

Weighted blankets, lap pads, or compression vests provide grounding input to calm the body.



Best for: Home / Rest



## Vestibular Input

Indoor swings, rocking chairs, or a mini-trampoline for rhythmic movement that regulates arousal.



Best for: Home



## Tactile & Fidgets

Pop-its, spinners, stress balls, or textured fabric strips to channel restless energy quietly.



Best for: Portable / School



## On-the-Go Kit

Pack a dedicated bag: Chewy jewelry, crunchy snacks, water bottle, and a comfort object.



Essential: Travel

 **Parent Tip:** Involve your child in choosing their tools. They know best what feels good to their nervous system.

# Resources & Next Steps

Building a village of support is key to long-term success. Connect with these professionals and communities to move forward.

## School & Community



### School Team / IEP

Request an IEP meeting to discuss accommodations like calm corners, visual schedules, and sensory breaks.



### Local Autism Organizations

Find local chapters for advocacy support, respite care resources, and sensory-friendly community events.



### Parent Support Groups

Connect with other parents who "get it." Shared experience is a powerful tool for resilience and finding local tips.



## Clinical Support Team



### Occupational Therapist (OT)

The "regulation experts." They assess sensory profiles and create personalized sensory diets to prevent overload.



### Psychologist

Helps with CBT, anxiety management, and parent coaching strategies.



### SLP (Speech)

Critical if communication barriers are a primary trigger for meltdowns.



### Action Item: Bring Your Data

Bring your completed **Meltdown Tracking Sheets** to these appointments. Concrete data helps professionals identify patterns and tailor their support plan faster.



# Important Disclaimer



## Educational Purposes Only

The content provided in this guide, including text, graphics, images, and other material, is for informational and educational purposes only. It is intended to offer general support and strategies for parents and caregivers of autistic children.



## Not a Substitute for Professional Advice

This guide does not constitute medical, psychological, or therapeutic advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician, psychologist, or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition or behavioral challenge. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this guide.



## In Case of Emergency

If you believe your child is experiencing a medical emergency or is at immediate risk of harming themselves or others, please call your local emergency services (e.g., 911) or go to the nearest emergency room immediately.

