



## 5 Steps to Develop Self Calming Strategies

The most effective long-term approach to helping children keep calm involves creating prevention plans to deal with specific triggers. However, you cannot always know ahead of time what will trigger a meltdown, and it is helpful to have some general strategies that the child can use at any time.

**The best calming strategies come from talking with children to find out what works best for them.**

This discussion should take place during calm moments and not during a meltdown. Learning can't happen during or just after meltdown moments.



All calming strategies must be practiced **before** the child is experiencing the situation if there is to be any possibility of using calming techniques when the child becomes upset.

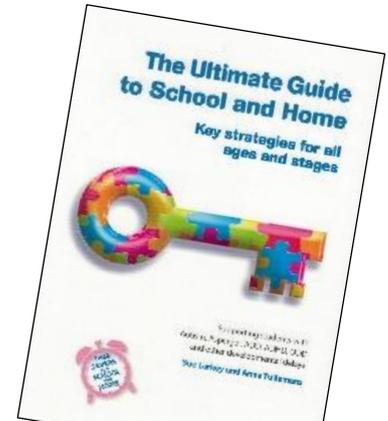
See page 37 Anxiety  
*Teacher Assistants*  
*Big Blue Book of Ideas*

### 5 Steps to Developing Self-Calming Strategies

1. When children are calm and focused, talk with them about how they know when they are feeling or getting upset. Help them to identify internal cues for these feelings (what does it feel like in your head, or tummy?) Write these down or draw them in pictures or colours. This will help them to identify the feelings.
2. Talk with them about things that may soothe and calm them. Talk about the things that you use to soothe and calm yourself to give them some context. Help them to practice some of the calming strategies on their list. The list can include things like:



- a. Taking a walk, drawing, listening to favourite music, jumping on a trampoline
  - b. Watching TV, reading, playing a favourite game
  - c. Holding a favourite toy, squeeze balls, stress balls, stuffed animals etc
3. Create a plan for both home and school and which strategies are more useful and appropriate in each category
  4. Decide on specific people with whom they can discuss these strategies when they are calm
  5. Have children **imagine the feelings and sensations** of rising anxiety or anger and **rehearse the calming strategy**. When they are beginning to get angry the child will have difficulty remembering what to do. By practicing we make these actions automatic. Teachers can practice calming strategies each morning in the class before the day begins. A good strategy that all children can join.



See pages 91 and 92  
 Manage Anxiety  
***The Ultimate Guide to  
 School and Home***

*Anna Tullemans is a consultant and author in Autism Spectrum based in Brisbane and runs regular workshops. Visit [annatullemans.com.au](http://annatullemans.com.au)*

© 2021



[annatullemans@gmail.com](mailto:annatullemans@gmail.com)  
[www.annatullemans.com.au](http://www.annatullemans.com.au)  
 0419 168 742