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## Developing a Caregiver Educational Tool for Children with Behavior Issues

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# Tips to Help Caregivers of Children with Difficult Behaviors

## ***What can I do to help my child adjust to loud noises, busy places, and being held?***

**Remember**, some children may not like physical touch or loud noises. They may move in the same way over and over to help stay calm during stressful times. Meltdowns can also happen in loud and busy places. I can try:

- Providing warning if we're going to a loud or busy place
- Trying ear plugs to decrease noise levels
- Using a small, squishy toy for my child to squeeze to relieve stress



## ***What can I do to prevent my child from running away from me?***

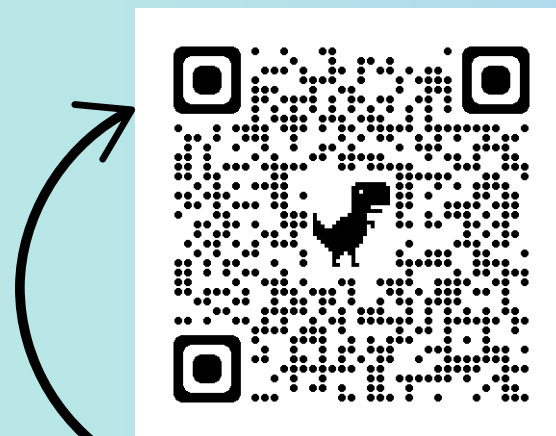
**Remember**, some children may feel like running away if they are stressed, want a toy, hear loud noises, get angry, or think running away is a game. I can try:

- Finding out what bothers my child, then try to avoid these things.
- Scheduling exercises and activities to keep your child busy
- Talking calmly with my child, and ask what their needs are. For example: “Are you hungry?”, “Are you scared?”, “Do you need quiet time?”

## ***What can I do if my child is hurting themselves?***

**Remember**, some children do this to distract themselves or to feel a sense of control. I can try:

- Teaching them how to communicate their feelings when upset and understanding why they are upset and acting out
- Making sure my child knows the schedule for the day
- Doing relaxing activities throughout the day such as yoga
- Listening to music and doing puzzles while also giving your child time to rest
- Using kind language while acknowledging their need for help
- Doing things with my child that they enjoy, helping them think about good ideas and thoughts
- Putting away things that can hurt my child. Giving them soft toys instead of hard toys



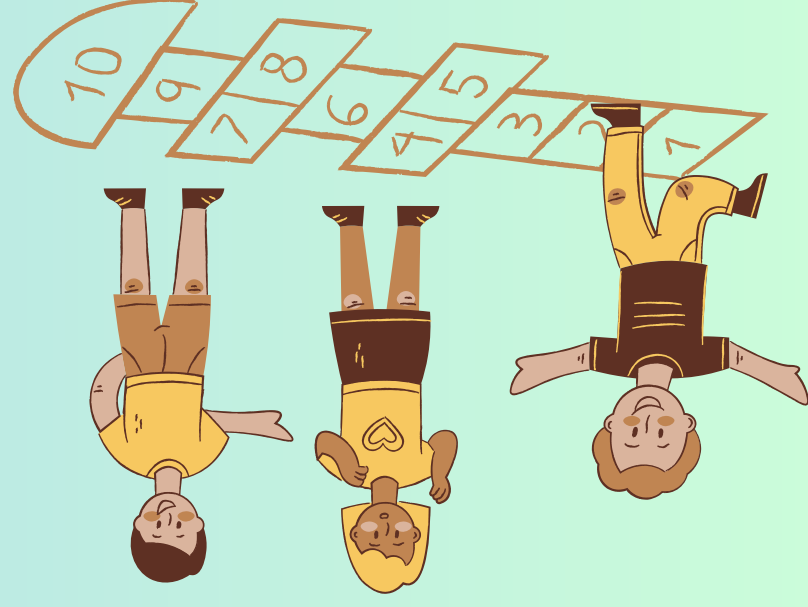
***More resources here!***



## How can I help my child be more successful in social situations?

**Remember**, some children struggle with other people and may not know how to tell a friend from a stranger. I can try:

- Getting them involved in fun activities at school, like clubs and programs where they can make friends
- Enrolling them in group talks for chances to share their thoughts and ideas
- Showing them how playing games with friends may help them learn to trust and work with others
- If my child experiences safety concerns or a stranger approaches them, tell them to walk away and find someone that they recognize



## How can I help my child control their emotions?

**Remember**, some children have trouble controlling their emotions due to stress or trauma. I can try:

- Responding in a calm and neutral way, taking a slow breath, and counting to ten before responding to my child when they are angry or upset
- Helping my child name their emotions
- Making sure that my child knows that you support them and that their feelings are okay to have
  - Try saying, "I understand that you are upset"
- To relax, have my child tighten and then relax muscles in their bodies. Have them start in their toes and slowly work your way up the body, ending with muscles in the head
- Helping my child relax by breathing deeply and focusing on how the soles of the feet feel
- Starting with small practices: take my child on a 15 minute trip to the grocery store or food bank. Next week, try bringing them on a 30 minute trip



## What can I do to help my child stay focused?

**Remember**, some children may have difficulty sitting still. I can try:

- Having a set schedule every day with routines
- Adding exercise to the routine
- Giving them one task at a time
- Keeping areas decluttered
- Giving them activities to do
- Coloring, building blocks, jumping rope
- Taking breaks from activities
- During breaks, plan something to get their bodies moving



- Playing classical and/or relaxing music
- Eating a well-balanced diet:
  - Fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and protein
- Establishing healthy, regular sleep patterns
  - Children should get at least 9-11 hours of sleep each night