



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Parenting the
Preschooler



Self Control

Build these skills when your child is calm; children are unable to learn something new when they are upset.

- Model staying calm when you are upset; children will handle anger and frustration the way they see you handling anger and frustration.
- Talk through the steps you take to remain calm with your child. For instance, if you are in the car with your child and someone cuts you off while driving, you could say, "It makes me angry when people don't use their turn signal! I'm going to take some deep breaths, like this, to help me calm down."
- Teach children to recognize and name their feelings. Reading books together about feelings and emotions can help.
- Notice when your child remains calm. For example you could say, "I noticed you stayed calm when your brother took your toy. You asked him to give it back with a calm voice. Instead of getting mad. You stayed in control. Way to go!"

Cool and Collected: The Benefits of Calming Down

Children can handle anger, frustration, and other "big" emotions more constructively when they are taught how to calm themselves. Being composed in difficult situations is best learned early in life. When children can recognize their feelings, they can begin to understand that anger and frustration are normal.



Photo by Allan Mas from Pexels

Research shows that preschoolers who exhibit self control go on to experience more success in school. They are also more likely to avoid risky behaviors as they grow up than their peers who have a hard time with self-control.



Photo by Ketut Subiyanto from Pexels

Why teach calming strategies?

- It helps children make and keep friends.
- Children who learn to cope with their emotions constructively have an easier time with disappointments, aggravation, and hurt feelings.
- It helps children be successful in school.
- It helps children develop the skills needed to be successful employees later.
- Children will handle disappointments in a healthier way.

Everyone gets mad sometimes!

- When children get angry, they sometimes use aggression, like biting or hitting. This does not mean they are bad; it just means they are upset and do not have the words to tell us.
- Children are not born with the ability to control their emotions, parents have to teach them. This is a long process that is not easy and happens over time.
- Children get scared when they are upset and become out of control.
- Children can learn self-control through everyday experiences.