



Early Years Inclusion Team

Calming strategies

Outbursts/ meltdowns are normal part of development for most children between the ages of 18 months to 3 years. Often referred to as "the terrible twos" children want things and get very frustrated if they are not given what they want immediately.

For some children with Special Educational Needs/ Disabilities there may be additional reasons for this i.e. Sensory Difficulties - you may want to seek advice from an Occupational Therapist

This can often result in the child throwing themselves on the floor, kicking, screaming, biting and banging their heads. If adults give children what they want when they have a meltdown, then the child may quickly learn that this approach is effective.

Support strategies may include:

- Adult to remain calm.
- Model to child how to take 'deep breaths' to help them calm..... bubbles can be a useful tool to support the child to breath out...
- Use a calm voice when talking with the child, reassure them: "It's okay"
- Some children respond to gentle touch others firm e.g. rubbing child's back, stroking arm
- If things become too much for the adult managing the situation swap with another adult- a fresh approach.
- Quiet music may help
- Provide a special place where the child can go and calm down e.g. sensory tent, book corner
- A special toy to hold and cuddle, or an object to mouth e.g. chew toy.
- Remember..... diversion/ distraction is always better if a potential meltdown can be spotted early.



Here are a couple for you to watch on YouTube



Easy to use calming strategies for Autism* <https://youtu.be/13DiS7cPgX0>

Making sense of Challenging Behaviour <https://youtu.be/OovjEwBithQ>

(please note that the video mentions Sussex based support- however, for Greenwich families this would be Greenwich based support)

* Please also note that although the video clip mentions Autism, these calming strategies are useful techniques for children who have Social Communications Difficulties.