

# MANAGING MELTDOWNS

Guidelines for Managing Big Feelings  
from the Parenting: Illuminated podcast with Marykate  
Schrack and Katie Robbins

## REMAIN CALM

- It is important as a parent or caregiver that you self-regulate, and manage your own emotions.
- If your child's emotions are heightened, you cannot meet them there. Remain as calm as possible and do not feed the emotional chaos.

Remember: This is not about your parenting

## VALIDATE FEELINGS

- Validate your child's feelings without approving of the behavior.
- It is often helpful to name your own feelings and emotions (e.g., Mommy is feeling frustrated by how upset you are and I don't want to yell, so I am going to step away).

## AVOID ABANDONMENT

- Even when you step away from the situation, stay within their sight but not right next to them. Physically comforting your child is not necessary, particularly at the onset.
- Do not allow the meltdown to go on for more than 15 minutes

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## Common Mistakes

### GIVING IN / BRIBERY

- Giving in, stepping in to fix the problem, or bribing your child to end the meltdown will only reinforce the behavior, leading to more meltdowns in the future.

### REACTING AT YOUR CHILD'S LEVEL

- It is important to use these situations as moments to model for your child what to do when they are frustrated.
- Remaining calm, removing yourself from the situation, and modeling appropriate behavior will, in the long run, teach your child how to appropriately handle frustration.

### ABANDONING YOUR CHILD

- It is important for your child to know that you are going to be there no matter what.
- While you don't approve of how they are behaving, it is important to show that you won't leave them in order to form a good, trusting, and healthy attachment relationship with them.