

JESSICA MCILVEEN
presents
KIDS YOGA THERAPY



CALM METHOD



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CALM METHOD Jessica Mcilveen

The majority of parents who come to me feel like something needs to change in the way they respond to explosive behaviours from their children. It may seem like nothing ever changes for anyone when this happens and there must be a better way to handle it.

The following is a great framework for you to turn to during those moments when you feel like you're going to lose your marbles. It is called the CALM method because that is the goal.

I've made it simple because it doesn't need to be complicated. This method encompasses the most successful aspects of the many parenting courses I have done during my career as a social worker.

These are the 4 steps to take when your children are exhibiting heightened behaviour. When this happens, just complete the questions in the worksheet.

C – Check in

A – Awareness

L – Limit your words

M – Maintain a beginner's mind

Step 1 – Check In

Check in with yourself to see where you are emotionally.

1. What is your body language? _____



2. What is your tone of voice saying? _____

3. What are you communicating to your child? _____

Is your fight/flight/freeze response activated? _____

If you are communicating frustration and anger and your fight/flight/freeze response is activated then there is no way you will de-escalate any situation or put out any fires.

The most helpful strategy is to have a reference point.

Think about a time when you were doing something enjoyable with this particular child. It should be a time where there was fun, laughter and playfulness. Reflect on this event and really think about it before answering the following questions:

What was your body language like?

What tone of voice were you using?



What were your facial expressions like? _____

This will become a reference point for you to use when things are getting difficult. When you are having negative emotions and realising your body language is not emulating the calm that you want, remember the feeling of being in this state and transfer into that.

Once you alter your physiology and calm your state you have a far better chance of your child doing the same.

Step 2- Awareness

Once you have become calm, work out what your child is trying to communicate in that moment. No child or adult will behave negatively without having a need they want met so become curious about what has happened throughout their day.

What language have they used in the last 10-20 minutes?

How have you interacted with them in the last 20-30 minutes?



What need is your child trying to communicate to you? _____

Step 3 – Limit Your Words

This step is probably the most important. Based on your child's developmental stage, they have an inability to connect with the language centre of their brain. This is the analytical part, the frontal cortex, which controls their ability to analyse their environment, remember consequences, and understand your perspective. They won't understand or respect that you may have a different perspective from theirs.

In those heightened moments they will be in their limbic system and thinking the world is going to end. When this happens the last thing they need is for anyone to speak words and try to reason with them. They will not see your perspective so this will be ineffective and a waste of your energy. It will just escalate the situation further. This is not a time to be teaching lessons, you can do that afterwards.

These meltdowns and tantrums are required, so they can never be avoided. Don't fight it, just go through the process with them and allow them to express whatever comes up. The most you need to say is "I love you and you're safe with me" and then remain silent.

When we come into this world our number 1 communication method is body language, it is not verbal. As adults we naturally want to use our language but to show care, love and connectedness all you need to do is use body language. Save your energy for something else.



What could you do differently when your child exhibits heightened behaviour? _____

Step 4 – Maintain a Beginner’s Mind

This is a Buddhist and a psychology strategy that entails pretending a situation has never happened before. This means seeing the situation as a learning experience instead of a frustrating experience. They are opposites, and if you are frustrated you are not willing to learn in that moment.

You are not willing to allow a different behaviour to come through, and even if it did, you wouldn’t see it because you’re frustrated and in a fight or flight response. When you can pretend something has never happened before you become curious and this is when you may notice a different behaviour.

You can then flood your child with positive praise and they will start to exhibit more of that healthy behaviour if you give them space to do so. This applies to any relationship. If you’re not willing to see a different behaviour, you’re not going to see it. Start opening your mind to having a learning experience and you might be surprised what you actually see.



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What new behaviours have you noticed? _____

I hope this method is simple enough for you and one you feel you can implement during challenging times. If you conserve your energy and just do this I guarantee you'll start to see your children's behaviours not heightening so quickly, or so often.