

## 11. Music

Put on **music** or **relaxing sounds** that your child enjoys. This could be their favorite song, or the sound of rain. Find out what your child likes to hear and play that when they are upset.



## 12. Laugh Together!

**Laughter is always a good way to relax!**

Find a way to make your child laugh by singing a silly song, tickling if they enjoy it, or looking at a funny picture. This can lessen the stress during difficult moments.



## Remember to Take Care of Yourself Too!

Navigating your child's Autism diagnosis can be a difficult and complex process. It can take a toll on your physical, emotional, and mental health, and ALL of the feelings you may feel, from joy to anger, are completely understandable. It can be helpful, however, to try and find calmness. Your calm response to a moment of stress can help your child feel that they are **secure**, and in a **safe place**, and can also help you to **manage more difficult and stressful situations**.

## Here are some ways to keep your cool when you are feeling stressed:

- Be sure to take time to do things that *make you happy*. Save space in your schedule for **YOU** time, even if that is only a few minutes!
- Remember that *not everything may go the way you had planned*, and be fair to that.
  - Remember to keep taking *deep breaths*. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, and focus just on the feeling of the breath travelling in and out of your body.
- Don't be afraid to *talk to someone*. It can be helpful to talk with your doctor, a trusted member of your family, or even another parent who may understand your experience, and can help give advice or guide you through more stressful times.
- Keep a journal to write down your feelings and thoughts whenever you have time. Just writing down how you are feeling can help you de-stress and move forward from stressful times.
  - Though it may be difficult to add extra activities into an already busy schedule, try having a "family night" or plan an activity for just your family that your child enjoys to *strengthen your relationships and add more FUN into the mix!*

### Local Resources

- Yoga Therapy for Children with Autism and Special Needs by Louise Goldberg (available at Amazon.com, \$19)
- Therapeutic Yoga at Boston Ability Center [www.bostonabilitycenter.com/patient\\_new.html](http://www.bostonabilitycenter.com/patient_new.html)
- Strength In Connection Yoga, Brookline and JP  
email: [erincarter80@hotmail.com](mailto:erincarter80@hotmail.com)

## Relaxation Tips for You and Your Child



**Navigating an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis as a parent can be a complicated and emotional experience. Though you may feel a wide range of emotions, it can be helpful to find calmness and have an open mind.**

**Here are some tips to try and help both you and your child make it through the more challenging moments.**

# 12 Tips and Techniques to Soothe Your Child



## A Few Things to Keep in Mind

Figure out **what things excite/upset your child**. When and why does this happen? When you know what makes your child upset, you are better able to help soothe them. You can even use some of these tips before a stressful event to help calm them down.

When your child is experiencing stress, frustration or sadness, it is easy to get upset too. It is important to remember that **your child's feelings are reasonable and normal**, and to soothe them rather than get angry with them when they show emotion. The more you let them **show** their feelings, the better they will be able to cope with them as they get older.

### 1. Soothing Smells

2. If your child likes a particular smell that calms him/her down, **carry around an item with that smell**. This could be a little bag of lavender flowers, mints, or even a family member's sweatshirt.

### 2. Physical Touch

If your child likes being touched or hugged, **wrap your arms around them tightly** and have them count to ten before you release. Repeat this if necessary.

### 3. Create a "Safe Space"

Create a "safe space" for your child at home. Maybe it is a part of their room with pictures of favorite things or family members. You can also put "calm down" activities here, like coloring books or favorite toys. When they get upset, **they can use the safe space to comfort them**.

### 4. Use Visuals

Create a poster of pictures of him/her when they are **calm**. Show them those pictures when they get upset and tell them how **proud** of them you are when they are able to calm down. This can also help them learn facial expression and what it means for them.



### 5. Picture a Calm Moment

Help your child to imagine something that makes them happy and have them close their eyes to **picture that scene**. Tell them to think about smells, sounds, and touch of what they are picturing. This might be a fun day with your family or your child's favorite place to go.

### 6. Relaxation and Tension

Help them relax by tensing and then releasing their muscles. Start with your child's hands, having him/her **squeeze them tight** for about 5 seconds then **open them**. Move on to other parts of the body- tightening and relaxing the

muscles. Any type of exercise can actually be helpful in calming down!

### 7. Deep Breathing

Teach your child to take a deep breath. For young children, using a pinwheel or bubbles to practice can help them focus on their breathing and distract from their stress.



### 8. Provide a Comfy Seat!

Many parents of children with autism report that their child enjoys sitting in a **bean bag chair**. It is soft, molds to the body and can be moved around to any room in your home. You can also create a comfy "sensory" seat with blankets or towels. Be creative and use what you have at home!

### 9. Try a Yoga Class

Yoga can help **reduce anger, stimming behaviors, and anxiety** and can help children control their emotions. It can be done at home or you can take a class. Ask your local Autism Support Center or community center for more information.

### 10. Get Back to Nature

Being outside and seeing green has been shown to **reduce anxiety and stress** in children. Take your child to a green space like the local park or public garden! To find a green space near you visit [bostonnatural.org](http://bostonnatural.org)