



Coping Tools for Kids

Simple, calming techniques your child can learn and use anytime

1. Balloon Breathing

For: any moment of big feelings

- Place both hands on your belly like it's a balloon.
- Breathe in slowly through your nose — feel the balloon grow.
- Breathe out slowly through your mouth — feel the balloon shrink.
- Repeat 3-5 times, nice and slow.

2. 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

For: feeling overwhelmed or anxious

- Name 5 things you can SEE around you.
- Name 4 things you can TOUCH.
- Name 3 things you can HEAR.
- Name 2 things you can SMELL.
- Name 1 thing you can TASTE.

3. Safe Place Visualization

For: before bed, or before something scary

- Close your eyes and picture your favorite calm place.
- What do you see there? What colors, shapes, or light?
- What do you hear? Waves, birds, quiet?
- Stay there in your mind for a few slow breaths.



4. Shake It Out

For: restless or jittery energy

- Stand up and shake your hands, like flicking off water.
- Shake your arms, then your legs, one at a time.
- Give a big wiggle with your whole body for 10 seconds.
- Take one slow breath to finish and feel the calm after.

5. Feelings Check-In

For: any time, especially after school

- Ask: What am I feeling right now?
- Ask: Where do I feel it in my body?
- Ask: What is one word for this feeling?
- It's okay not to know right away — that's practice too.

6. Story Rescue

For: a fear that feels too big to talk about

- Imagine a brave character who feels the same way you do.
- What does the character do to feel braver?
- Picture yourself doing that same brave thing.
- Remember: this character can visit anytime you need them.

A Note for Grown-Ups

These tools work best with practice on calm days, not just hard ones — like a muscle, coping skills get stronger the more they're used. Try practicing one together during a quiet moment, so it's familiar and ready to use when a harder moment comes along.