

Identifying Why **Meltdowns** Happen & What They Can Do Instead



✦ Remember: Meltdowns serve a purpose. Meltdowns happen to:

- Get something they want.
- Avoid or escape from something they don't want or don't want to do.
- Get attention.

✦ Writing down what happened before a meltdown can help determine the purpose.

- Trigger - what happened directly before the meltdown.
- Behavior - what did the meltdown look like.
- Purpose - with this information, what can you guess is the reason for the meltdown?

✦ The appropriate behavior picked must serve the same purpose as the meltdown. This will decrease meltdowns over time. Usually this involves communication.

- Communication does not have to mean talking.
- Pointing, signing, using a communication device, shaking head, thumbs up, or a picture exchange are all valid forms of communication!

✦ Here are some examples of appropriate behavior to help your child do instead:

- Asking for the iPad gets the child the iPad instead of crying for it.
- Tapping you on the shoulder gets the child your attention instead of hitting.
- Signing for a break gets the child out of doing homework instead of biting their arm.

✦ Look for patterns, practice when they're calm & be consistent!

- By writing down the situations you can start to identify patterns of behavior that will help you predict and avoid meltdowns.
- Practice the appropriate behaviors when the child is calm so they become better at the skill.
- Meltdowns are not easy! But, with consistency and monitoring, change will occur!

✦ Real life happens. Perfection is not realistic. It's OK.

- Make the most out of these meltdown situations that you can.
For example, wait for the meltdown to lessen, pause, then say, "crackers" as you hand them crackers.
- When life happens, just make sure to not give in fully to the meltdown. It doesn't have to be perfect.

