

# Teaching the Body Awareness Skill That Helps Kids Calm Down

Big feelings usually start in the body –not all at once, but in small signals first. A racing heart. Tight muscles. A stomach ache. Extra energy. When kids learn to notice these early body clues, they're better able to calm down before emotions take over. The tools below will help you teach this powerful skill.

## During Calm Moments

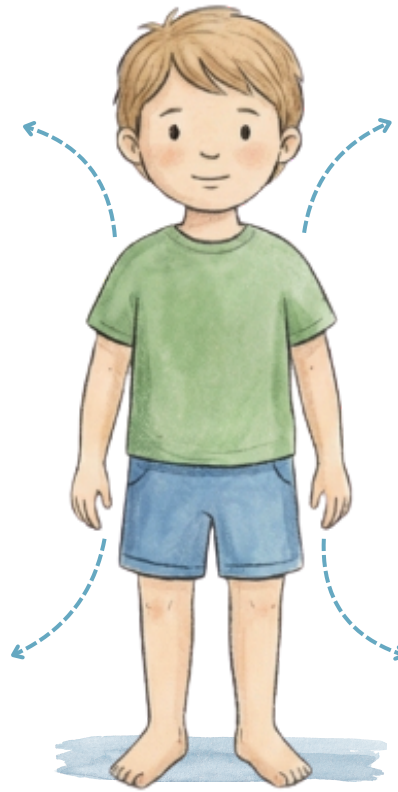
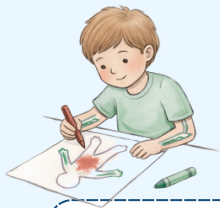
### THE BODY SCAN

During a calm moment in the day, have the child close their eyes and **"scan" their body from head to toes**. Ask them to identify one area that feels "loud" (tight, warm or heavy) and one that feels "quiet" (relaxed or soft).



### THE VISUAL MAP

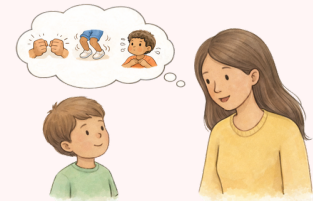
Have the child draw a body outline and **color in areas** to represent different emotions in their body. For example, red for feeling anxious in the stomach or blue for calmness in their hands.



## During Tense Moments

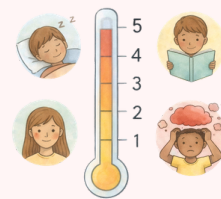
### THE PRE-WIGGLE

Help your child **notice the early signs** they're getting tense, like their fists tightening or legs wiggling. Name it together, such as "The Jumpy Feeling" or "Squirmy legs."



### THE TEMPERATURE CHECK

Use a scale of 1–5 to help the child **label their internal intensity**, making it easier to understand how they're feeling. Ask, "Are you at a 3 or a 5 right now?"



## Think Out Loud



Children learn by observation. Use simple "I" statements to connect your body signals to your emotions. For example: "My chest feels a little tight. I'm feeling overwhelmed by this loud music."

## Scripts You Can Use

Use these when you see the first signs of frustration or overstimulation.

### FOR A YOUNGER CHILD:

"I see your hands are really tight right now. When mine get tight like that, I know I'm feeling mad. Is your tummy feeling tight or heavy too?"

### FOR A TEEN:

"Pause a second. Your shoulders look tight. Take one breath with me."

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