

De-escalation Strategies & Techniques

De-escalation strategies & techniques are meant to be used early on (i.e., **as soon as** you notice the child is starting to get upset). It's important to pay attention to early cues that frustration is building (e.g., raised voices, rapid breathing, tense muscles, grumbling, etc.) so that you can de-escalate the situation **before** tempers fully flare. First, calm the situation down. Then try to reason, and problem solve.

1. Act calm (even if you're not)
2. Say, "let's talk about this later."
3. Use humour to lighten the mood
4. Lower your voice
5. Give a choice
6. Walk away
7. Ask, "what would help you right now?"
8. Change the subject to a positive one
9. Give personal space
10. Say, "I see where you are coming from."
11. Distract with a photo of something they like
12. Show that you are listening
13. Remove the audience
14. Say, "I want to help you"
15. Talk about something they like
16. Make a joke
17. Encourage the person
18. Remind them of something amazing they did
19. Say, "You can do this."
20. Call another adult for help
21. Say, "Let's call... I think they can help."
22. Be willing to find a solution
23. Offer to change the way you are doing something
24. Re-state what the person is saying
25. Validate their thoughts
26. Avoid over-reacting
27. Use active listening
28. Offer a solution
29. Let the other person talk without interrupting
30. Say, "I see your point."
31. Offer to take a walk with the person
32. Clarify expectations
33. Remind them of something they love
34. Apologize for something you did wrong or the way it was taken.
35. Invite them to do a preferred activity
36. Ask if they can explain more about how they're feeling
37. Try to understand the person's perspective
38. Slow yourself down to avoid getting worked up
39. Say, "So, you're upset because...right?"
40. Don't say, "calm down."
41. Show empathy
42. Encourage the person to use a coping strategy
43. Don't take items or personal property from them
44. Encourage the person to talk a walk or get a drink
45. Give the person an "out" (i.e., letting them go to another room or walk away)
46. Ask, "Would it help if..."
47. Keep escape routes open to the door
48. Coach the person with positive remarks
49. Acknowledge when you agree with the person
50. Remind the person "you're not in trouble."
51. Tell the person, "I am here for you"
52. Say "Talk to me" and then listen
53. Tell the person to take a minute to themselves
54. Ignore the behaviour
55. Distract by saying, "Hey, let's go..."
56. Be respectful in your tone of voice
57. "Do what works" in the moment
58. Spend time de-briefing after the incident to identify ways to improve
59. Ask them to draw a picture of what happened
60. Avoid needing to get the last word.