

ABC's for Parents of Little Ones

As parents, we want to support our little ones during tough times. However, adults can't help children navigate upset and reach a calm state unless we are composed ourselves. This printable resource provides a three-step process for calming yourself and providing the safety your children need.

The inner state of adults (upset or calm) dictates the inner state of young children. A young child cannot feel calm when their parent or caregiver is clearly upset. Children easily pick up on the feelings of the adults around them. If you want to help your child feel composed, the first step is attending to your own composure.

This free resource introduces three steps to help you regain your composure before attempting to calm a child. Print this quick guide for parents of little ones, then post it somewhere prominent as a helpful reminder. With these tips, you'll be a more present and effective guide through these unique times.

Conscious Discipline Glossary:

- **S.T.A.R.:** One of Conscious Discipline's four core breathing techniques, S.T.A.R. stands for **S**mile, **T**ake a deep breath, **A**nd **R**elax. Breathe in through the nose with the belly going out, then out through the mouth with the belly going in. Exhale longer than you inhale. Three deep belly breaths shut off the body's "fight or flight" response.
- **Connection:** The four components of meaningful connection are eye contact, touch, presence and a playful situation.
- **Safe Place™:** The Conscious Discipline Safe Place is a self-regulation center where children use research-based, developmentally appropriate tools and strategies to change their inner state from upset to calm. Only in a calm, optimal state can the brain function well enough to learn and problem-solve effectively. For children, the parent or caregiver is the very first Safe Place.

ABC's for parents of little ones...



AWARENESS

Be aware of your own inner state. Is your heart rate elevated? Are you feeling tense/frustrated, etc.? Children can FEEL our upset, so the next step is BREATHE DEEPLY and bring yourself back to the present moment.



BREATHE

Take deep belly breaths. Inhale through your nose for at least 5 seconds, and exhale through your mouth for at least 10 seconds. Do this at least 3 times.



CLOSENESS

They want to be close to you because you are their Safe Place™. Co-regulation and connection/bonding happen when they are close to you. Take deep breaths with them in moments of closeness.