



My home self-control plan

Short sections for you: safety and support, what is behind it, big feelings, stop-think-choose, a calming menu, practice and routines, and a log.

01 1. Read first: when this is not the tool

If your child tells you someone is hurting them, or you are worried about their safety, this worksheet is not the tool. In the UK, adults can call the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000. In the US, the Childhelp hotline is 1-800-422-4453 (it is not emergency services). If a child is in immediate danger, call 999 (UK), 911 (US) or your local emergency number. If your child talks about hurting themselves, speak to a GP or call your local emergency number. If hard moments are lasting, speak to your GP or your child's school (the special educational needs coordinator, or SENCo, in the UK, or the school counsellor or psychologist in the US) about getting support looked at. This is not therapy and not a professional assessment. You matter too: look after yourself. If you are struggling, Samaritans are on 116 123 (UK and Ireland), 988 (US), or see findahelpline.com or selfgrowth.org/help. To report a concern about a child, contact your local child protective services (US) or the police. In the UK, contact the NSPCC (0808 800 5000), or call 999 in an emergency.

Who I can talk to about this (a friend, my GP, the school):

How are hard moments at home at the moment?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Very hard

Fairly calm

02 2. What is behind the hard moments?

Self-control gets harder for everyone when we are tired, hungry, stressed or in a loud, rushed place. Look for patterns without blaming your child, yourself or anything in your home. Screens and sugar are not the enemy; notice if there is a link, and only change things that help.

Things I have noticed before the hard moments:

- ☐ Tired, or a rough night's sleep
- ☐ Hungry or thirsty
- ☐ Coming home from school, nursery or a busy day
- ☐ A change of plan or a transition (leaving the house, turning off a screen)
- ☐ Noise, crowds or being rushed
- ☐ Something stressful at school, with friends or with a sibling
- ☐ A worry that they have not told me about
- ☐ Being asked to wait with nothing to do

What low self-control can look like at home (tick what you see, and describe it, do not label it):

- ☐ Shouting or hitting out when frustrated
- ☐ Falling apart when the answer is no
- ☐ Finding it very hard to wait, or interrupting
- ☐ Grabbing things from a sibling
- ☐ Struggling to switch off a screen or stop a game

When it happens

What I saw

Time, place, what was
going on

Just the facts

**What might have
been behind it**

03 3. When the feelings are huge

A big meltdown can be a sign that a child is overwhelmed, not that they are bad or doing it on purpose. In the middle of one, a child may not be able to reason in that moment, so use few words and stay close. Teaching and talking come later, when everyone is calm. Never hold a child down or use physical force to stop a meltdown; if a child is hurting themselves or others, make the space safe and get help. If a child tells you something that worries you about their safety: stay calm, listen, do not promise to keep it secret, do not press for detail, write down their words, and use the numbers in the read-first section at the top of this page today.

In the moment

Few words, calm voice,
close by

What I could say

e.g. 'I'm here. This is
big. We'll sort it out'

Afterwards, when calm

e.g. 'What was hard?
What could we try?'

What I need to do to stay calm myself (a breath, stepping back, a word to my partner):

04 4. A stop-think-choose script

A short routine to practise together: stop, take a breath, think about the choices, pick one. Many schools and homes teach a version of this routine, so make it yours. Keep the words short and say them in your own voice. Practise it as a game first, when nothing is going wrong. If a child tells you something that worries you about their safety: stay calm, listen, do not promise to keep it secret, do not press for detail, write down their words, and use the numbers in the read-first section at the top of this page today.

Step

Stop · Breathe · Think ·
Choose

Our words

Short, in your child's
language

Action or picture

A small, low-stakes situation to try it on first (e.g. waiting for a turn on a game):

05 5. A calming moves menu, made together

Sit down with your child when you are both calm and try a few moves. Let them pick the ones they like, and draw or write them on a card. Offer the card as a choice during a hard moment, not as a punishment. For teens, make it a list on their phone or a note on their wall instead. If a child tells you something that worries you about their safety: stay calm, listen, do not promise to keep it secret, do not press for detail, write down their words, and use the numbers in the read-first section at the top of this page today.

Moves to try (tick the ones your child likes):

- ☐ Slow breaths, with a longer breath out
- ☐ Pushing palms together, or pushing against a wall
- ☐ A drink of water
- ☐ A cuddle, or a quiet spot to sit close to me
- ☐ Squeezing a cushion or a soft toy
- ☐ Jumping, stretching, a short run or a walk outside
- ☐ Drawing, music or a short audio story
- ☐ Counting, or naming things they can see

My child's top three, in their words:

06 6. Practise when calm, routines and noticing effort

Diamond and Lee found that successful programmes for children aged 4 to 12 involve repeated practice with the challenge rising gradually. At home that can be a short game that needs waiting or stopping, played for a few minutes. Predictable routines for mornings, mealtimes and bedtime also reduce the number of moments that need self-control. These are ideas to try and watch.

Ideas for short practice at home:

- ☐ Stop-and-go or freeze games
- ☐ Turn-taking board or card games, where waiting is part of the fun
- ☐ Cooking or baking, where they wait for each step
- ☐ Taking turns to choose the music or the film, which helps with siblings
- ☐ Moving together: a walk, dancing, yoga, a kick-about
- ☐ Role-playing: you get it wrong, they spot it

A routine point

Morning, after school,
screens off, bedtime

What happens now

One small change to try

e.g. a warning, a picture
chart

What I saw them do

What I will say

Describe the effort, not the child

Specific, e.g. 'you took a breath before
you answered'

07 7. My log, and talking to school

Write down what you see in a line or two. Look back after a couple of weeks for patterns. If you decide to talk to the school or your GP, bring the log with you.

Date and time	What happened before	What I tried	How it went (1 to 10)
			10 = settled

After a couple of weeks: how are hard moments at home now?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Very hard					Fairly calm				

What I want to tell the school or my GP:

When you're done, a moment to reflect

- What is going on around us just before a hard moment?
- What does my child seem to need most in a big feeling: space, closeness, or fewer words?
- Which one routine could I make more predictable this week?
- When did I last see my child stop and choose differently, and what did I say?
- What do I need, as the adult, to stay steadier in the hard moments?

Free worksheet from selfgrowth.org. Free self-growth worksheets for real life. Fill it in online and it saves as you go: selfgrowth.org/worksheets/self-control-worksheet-for-parents



If things feel heavier than a worksheet can hold

These are self-reflection tools, not therapy. If you're struggling, especially if you have any thoughts of harming yourself, please reach out to someone now. In the US, call or text **988**. In the UK & Ireland, call **116 123** (Samaritans). Elsewhere, find a free helpline at findahelpline.com. If you're in immediate danger, call your local emergency number.