

Parent Guide to Helping Kids Reset Big Feelings

A practical guide to help kids calm their body, use their words, and make a better choice after frustration, anger, or overwhelm.

Created by: Horizon ATA Martial Arts
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1 Why Big Feelings Need a Reset Plan

Big feelings are a normal part of being a kid. Frustration, anger, and overwhelm happen to everyone.

The goal is not to stop feelings. The goal is to teach kids what to do when their feelings get too big so they can make better choices.

At Horizon ATA, we teach that self-control means being able to pause and start your body. That's how kids build stronger habits and more confidence every day.¹

Self-control means being able to pause and start your body.

Self-control also means thinking before acting and remembering that every action has a consequence — good or bad.

2 Core Message

Big feelings are allowed. Hurtful actions are not.

- Pause your body.
- Notice what you feel.
- Think before acting.
- Use your words.
- Choose a better action and try again after a mistake.



3. Horizon Life Skill Connection

Primary Life Skills: Self-Control, Discipline, Respect

Supporting Life Skills: Focus, Responsibility, Communication, Confidence

When kids reset their big feelings, they strengthen self-control. That skill supports success at home, at school, and in every part of life.

4. Parent Reminder

Patience is key to growth. But patience does not mean letting everything go.

- You can be calm and kind while still holding the line.
- Your child needs steady adults who lead.
- Small, consistent resets build lifelong self-control.
- You are not alone — your effort makes a difference.

Our Reset Framework

We teach kids a simple process they can use anytime big feelings take over.



PAUSE

Stop and calm your body.



THINK

Notice, choose, and plan.



CHOOSE

Pick a better action.



TRY AGAIN

Reset and keep growing.

Practice now.
Use it later.
Build it for life.

¹ Supported by: American Academy of Pediatrics. (2021). Helping Children Manage Big Emotions. HealthyChildren.org

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The Horizon Reset Framework

Pause. Think. Choose. Try Again.

Big feelings are a normal part of being a kid. The Horizon Reset Framework gives children a simple path to follow when their emotions feel too big. With practice and your support, these steps become habits that build self-control, confidence, and better choices every day. ¹



PAUSE

Pause means the child stops the action before it gets worse. This gives the body a chance to calm down and the brain a chance to catch up.

- Take one breath.
- Put hands by your side.
- Step away, sit down, or set down the object.

Parent Script:

"Pause your body first. Then we can solve the problem."



"Take one breath. I'll wait."



THINK

Think means the child notices what is happening. The thinking brain is powerful, but it is not always ready right away. ¹

- What am I feeling?
- What does my body want to do?
- What will happen if I do that?
- What is a better choice?

Parent Script:

"What is your body telling you?"



"What choice are you about to make?"



CHOOSE

Choose means the child picks a better action. Good choices help the child feel proud and build stronger habits.

- Use words.
- Ask for help.
- Take space.
- Accept no.
- Apologize.
- Fix what happened.
- Move to the next activity.

Parent Script:

"You can be upset and still make a good choice."



"What is the next right thing?"



TRY AGAIN

Try again means the mistake is not the end of the story. Every reset is a new chance to do better.

- Say it again respectfully.
- Pick up what was thrown.
- Apologize.
- Finish the task.
- Go back to the routine.

Parent Script:

"That was not the right choice. Now show me the better one."



"Let's reset and do the next step."



PAUSE



THINK



CHOOSE



TRY AGAIN



Big feeling happens.



I pause and breathe.



I think about my choice.



I choose a better action.



I try again and keep going.



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Feelings Are Allowed. Actions Have Consequences.



A strong self-control plan needs both empathy and expectations.
If a parent only focuses on the feeling, the child may not learn responsibility.
If a parent only focuses on the consequence, the child may not learn how to manage the feeling.
The balance is: *"I understand your feeling. I will still hold the boundary."*

 Feelings are allowed.	 Actions still have limits.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Angry  Sad  Embarrassed  Disappointed  Frustrated  Nervous  Overwhelmed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Hit  Kick  Throw things  Scream at people  Hurt others  Destroy property  Threaten  Refuse every direction without consequence



HealthyChildren.org encourages parents to help children notice, name, and acknowledge big feelings while still supporting healthy boundaries.²

Parent Scripts That Balance Both



When a child is angry:

"I can see you are angry. It is okay to feel angry. It is not okay to **hit**."



When a child is disappointed:

"You are disappointed because the answer is no. I understand. The answer is **still** no."



When a child yells:

"You can be upset, but you may not yell at me. Pause your body and try again with **respect**."



When a child throws something:

"You were frustrated. Throwing was not okay. Now you need to pick it up and **reset**."

Good and Bad Consequences

Good choices can lead to:



- More trust
- More independence
- More privileges
- More confidence
- More praise
- Better relationships

Poor choices can lead to:



- Loss of privilege
- Repair damage
- Less freedom
- Extra supervision
- Apologizing
- Trying again before moving on



Parent Reminder

A consequence should teach, not just punish. It should be connected, calm, clear, realistic, and followed through.

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² Source: HealthyChildren.org. (2023). Setting limits. [healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/preschool/Pages/Setting-Limits.aspx](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/preschool/Pages/Setting-Limits.aspx)

Common Big Feeling Moments at Home



Every family has moments when emotions get big. The key is to practice a reset plan before the moment becomes too large. Here are common situations where parents can use the **Pause. Think. Choose. Try Again.** framework.

1

Screen Time Ending



Transitions from screen time to the next activity can be tough. A calm plan helps prevent a meltdown.

Parent Plan

- Give a warning.
- Keep it simple.
- Use the same transition routine.
- Move directly to the next activity.

Parent Scripts

- “You have five minutes left. When the timer goes off, pause your body and turn it off.”
- “Your next choice is how you transition.”



2

Being Told “No”



Hearing “no” can bring big feelings. Kids need to feel heard while learning the boundary stays the same.

Parent Plan

- Acknowledge the feeling.
- Keep the boundary.
- Do not over-explain.
- Offer a better action.
- Praise recovery.

Parent Scripts

- “I know you are disappointed. The answer is still no.”
- “You handled that no with self-control.”



3

Homework Frustration



Homework can bring frustration, confusion, or feeling overwhelmed. A reset helps kids stay engaged and keep trying.

Parent Plan

- Pause the body.
- Break the task into one small step.
- Use a short reset break.
- Return to the task.
- Praise effort.

Parent Scripts

- “Let’s pause, breathe, and do one problem.”
- “Trying again after frustration is self-control.”



4

Sibling Conflict



Arguments and fights happen. Kids need help staying safe, using words, and repairing the relationship.

Parent Plan

- Separate bodies if needed.
- Name the problem.
- Have each child use words.
- Repair harm.
- Practice the better choice.

Parent Scripts

- “Hands stay to yourself.”
- “What can you say instead?”



5

Losing, Mistakes, or Being Corrected



Disappointment from losing, making mistakes, or being corrected can feel hard. Kids need to learn that setbacks help them grow.

Parent Plan

- Normalize the feeling.
- Keep the expectation.
- Connect self-control to growth.

Parent Scripts

- “Losing does not feel good. How you act after losing matters.”
- “You can reset and try again.”



Quick Parent Check

When big feelings start to show up, ask yourself:

- Is my child unsafe or just upset?
- Do they need fewer words?
- Do they need space?
- Do they need help naming the feeling?
- Do they need a consequence or a reset first?

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Using the Self-Control Reset Sheet and Related Resources



The Self-Control Reset Sheet for Kids is the main matching worksheet for this guide. It helps children slow down, notice what they feel, name what happened in their body, choose a reset plan, and think about what they can do differently next time.

Use this guide with: Self-Control Reset Sheet for Kids

Self-Control Reset Sheet for Kids
A simple tool to help kids calm their body, use their words, and make a better choice.

Name: _____ Week of: _____

1 HOW I FEEL

Right now, I might feel:

<input type="checkbox"/> Angry	<input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelmed
<input type="checkbox"/> Frustrated	<input type="checkbox"/> Left out
<input type="checkbox"/> Sad	<input type="checkbox"/> Disappointed
<input type="checkbox"/> Nervous	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Embarrassed	

My body may feel like:

<input type="checkbox"/> Tight fists	<input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to cry
<input type="checkbox"/> Fast breathing	<input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to yell
<input type="checkbox"/> Loud voice	<input type="checkbox"/> Shutting down

2 SELF-CONTROL MEANS I CAN...

- 1 **Notice my feelings** I pay attention to what my body and emotions are telling me.
- 2 **Pause before I react** I can stop, breathe, and slow my body down.
- 3 **Use calm choices** I keep my hands to myself, lower my voice, and stay safe.
- 4 **Use my words** I can say what I need instead of yelling or shutting down.
- 5 **Try again** I can reset and make a better choice, even after a hard moment.

3 MY RESET PLAN — I CAN DO THIS! Use these steps when big feelings happen!

STEP 1: Pause Stop my body Keep my hands to myself Stand or sit safely

STEP 2: Breathe Take 3 deep breaths Breathe in slowly Breathe out slowly

STEP 3: Calm My Body Relax my shoulders Unclench my hands Use a quieter voice Look forward and later

STEP 4: Use My Words "I need a break." "I feel frustrated." "Can you help me?"
 "I need a minute." "I'm ready to try again."

STEP 5: Make a Better Choice Try again Go back calmly Ask for help Solve the problem respectfully

4 MY RESET CHECK-IN

What happened? _____

What helped me calm down? _____

What is one better choice I can make now? _____

I am proud because: _____

5 PARENT TIP

- Self-control is not about never having big feelings.
- Help your child slow their body first.
- Encourage them to use words and try again.
- Praise pausing, asking for help, and making a better choice.

"Let's calm your body first." "Take a breath and reset." "Use your words."

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- 1 Use it after your child is calm enough to think.
- 2 Keep it short and simple.
- 3 Focus on the next better choice, not on blame.
- 4 Use it consistently so it becomes a helpful habit.

Related Horizon Parent Resource: Screen-Time Transition Guide for Kids

Screen-Time Transition Guide for Kids
A simple tool to help kids stop screen time calmly and move to the next activity.

Name: _____ Week of: _____

1 MY SCREEN-TIME GOAL

This week, I want to practice:

<input type="checkbox"/> Turning off screens the first time	<input type="checkbox"/> Following directions without arguing
<input type="checkbox"/> Using a calm body	<input type="checkbox"/> Saying or pausing when it is time
<input type="checkbox"/> Using a respectful voice	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving to the next activity	

The screen I am practicing with most is:

<input type="checkbox"/> TV	<input type="checkbox"/> Tablet	<input type="checkbox"/> Video games
<input type="checkbox"/> Phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Computer	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

2 SCREEN-TIME SUCCESS MEANS I CAN...

- 1 **Hear the warning** I can listen when an adult tells me screen time is almost over.
- 2 **Pause calmly** I can stop what I am doing without yelling, arguing, or making demands.
- 3 **Use my words** I can ask a question or respond respectfully.
- 4 **Reset my body** I can take a breath, put the screen down, and get ready for what is next.
- 5 **Move to the next activity** I can transition to homework, dinner, bath, bedtime, chores, or family time.

3 MY TRANSITION PLAN — I CAN DO THIS! Practice these steps when screen time ends!

1 Get the Warning I hear the 5-minute warning I hear the 2-minute warning I know stopping time is coming I ask, "What do I need to finish or save?"

2 Pause or Save Pause the show Save the game Finish the level or mission if allowed Close the app Put the device down safely

3 Reset My Body Take a deep breath Keep my hands calm Use a quiet voice Keep my body under control Look at the adult speaking

4 Use Respectful Words Okay Can I save this first? What is next? Can you help me transition? I need one minute to reset.

5 Move to the Next Activity Homework Dinner Bath Bedtime Chores Reading Outside play Family time Other: _____

4 MY TRANSITION CHECK-IN

What felt hard about stopping? _____

What helped me transition? _____

What is one good choice I made? _____

What can I do better next time? _____

5 PARENT TIP

- Give a clear warning before stopping.
- Let your child know what comes next.
- Keep the routine consistent.
- Stay calm and avoid long arguments.
- Praise a calm transition quickly.
- Practice the plan before screen time starts.

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Horizon Connection

Self-control is practiced every week at Horizon ATA through listening, waiting turns, controlling movement, and thinking before acting. Our instructors guide students to stay focused, make better choices, and try again when things get hard. Read more about focus and self-control on our blog at [how martial arts supports kids with ADHD](#) and in our article on [self-control for young children](#).

Want More Support?

Want your child to practice self-control, confidence, discipline, and respect in a positive environment?

Learn more about the [New Student Experience](#) at Horizon ATA Martial Arts.

Helpful Sources

- Miller, C. (2025, August 27). How to help children calm down. Child Mind Institute. Clinical experts: Lindsey Giller, PsyD, and Stephanie Samar, PsyD.
- Shah, P. (2024, November 7). Helping little people manage big feelings. HealthyChildren.org. American Academy of Pediatrics.

Educational Note

This guide is for educational support and general parent guidance. It is not a substitute for medical, mental health, educational, legal, or school-specific advice.

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