

Behaviour

nobody's perfect

Stay Calm and Connected

- **Help your child calm down.** Children can choose better behaviour when they are calm. Sometimes they need help to calm down. Babies are often calmed by cuddling, rocking and singing. Sometimes you need to take a child away from the difficult situation. You may find it helps to take a few deep breaths with your child and let your muscles relax.
- **Listen to feelings.** Empathy means being able to understand what other people are feeling. When you try to understand your child's feelings, you show him that his feelings matter. He knows that you respect them. By understanding better the reasons for his behaviour, you build the connections between you. He feels that you care.
- **Help your child put her feelings into words.** Talk about common feelings, like happiness, sadness, fear and anger. Give your child's feelings a name. For example, you might say, "I see that you are sad." Or "I'm glad you're happy today! Did something really good happen?" Children learn how other people feel by talking about feelings. They learn empathy when their own feelings are respected and understood.
- **Accept your child's feelings.** Let your child know it is okay to be upset and angry. Other people have those feelings too. You can accept her negative feelings without accepting negative behaviour. It is okay to be angry, but it is not okay to hit other people.
- **Stay calm.** When your child breaks the rules, losing your temper will not help. Children can think more clearly when you speak calmly. Sometimes it can be very hard for a parent to be calm and reasonable. Be a good example. If you are so angry that you think you might say or do something you will be sorry for, take a moment for yourself. Be sure your child is in a safe place. Spend a few minutes alone until you feel calmer.



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



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Fun & Easy Activities

Blowing Bubbles

- One of the best ways to calm down is to take slow deep breaths. This works for both adults and children. To make deep breathing fun, try blowing bubbles. Here is a recipe to make a bubble mix at home.
 1. Put about 1/2 inch (1 cm) of water in a pot or bowl.
 2. Add about 3 or 4 squirts of dishwashing detergent.
 3. Mix gently so you do not get a lot of suds.
 4. If you have it, add 1 teaspoon (5 ml) of glycerine, which can be bought at drug stores. This will make the bubbles even better.
- Bubbles can be blown through almost anything with a hole in it. You can buy a plastic bubble wand. You can also use a small funnel or a plastic cookie cutter. You can even cut a hole in the centre of a margarine lid.
- Bubble blowing takes practice. Most children can control their breath enough to blow bubbles around age 2 years. Every child is different though. It may be easier for your child to blow bubbles if you hold the wand.

Dance to the Music

- Sometimes your child needs to move to calm down. Put on some music and dance around the kitchen. Change the music to suit your mood. Do you need fast music to burn off energy? Or do you need some slow music to calm down to? Give your child a dish towel to hold. A piece of wide ribbon would work too. She can wave it around in time to the music. Join in with your child. Maybe you need to move too!

