

ENA'S NEURODIVERGENT ACADEMY

The De-escalation Script

A simple, 3-step verbal framework for co-regulating during an emotional meltdown.

A meltdown is not a tantrum; it is an involuntary physiological response to sensory or emotional overload. During a meltdown, the brain's logic center shuts down, meaning reasoning, lecturing, or demanding compliance will only escalate the situation. Your primary goal is **co-regulation**—lending your calm nervous system to help settle theirs.

STEP 1: VALIDATE & GROUND (THE "I SEE YOU" PHASE)

Before you can redirect, you must validate the emotion. Keep your voice low, slow, and steady. Do not try to fix the problem; just acknowledge the reality of their distress.

"I see that you are feeling incredibly overwhelmed right now. It makes sense that you are upset."

"This is really hard, and you are allowed to feel frustrated."

STEP 2: OFFER SAFETY & SPACE (THE "I AM HERE" PHASE)

Remove all immediate demands and assure them they are not in trouble. Reduce sensory input (dim lights, lower volume) and offer a safe physical presence without forcing eye contact or touch.

"You are safe. You are not in trouble."

"I am going to sit right here with you while your body feels this way. Take all the time you need."

STEP 3: GENTLE REDIRECTION (THE "LET'S RESET" PHASE)

Only introduce this step once you notice physical signs of de-escalation (slowing breath, relaxed shoulders, decreased crying). Offer a low-demand sensory choice rather than an open-ended question.

"Would you like to wrap up in the weighted blanket, or would you like a sip of cold water?"

"Let's take a deep breath together. I'll count for us."

WORDS TO AVOID DURING A MELTDOWN

When the nervous system is overwhelmed, certain phrases add fuel to the fire. Avoid saying:

- "Calm down" or "You're overreacting." (Invalidating)
- "Look at me when I'm talking to you." (Adds sensory and social demands)
- "Use your words." (They physically cannot access language skills in this state)
- "If you don't stop crying, we are leaving." (Adds threat and anxiety)

Transform challenges into opportunities for growth and deeper connection.

Schedule a **Neurodivergent Coaching Consultation** with Coach E.N.A. today to learn real-world tools tailored to your family's unique strengths.

Enabling Neurodiverse Achievement — W.E.B. Family Solutions