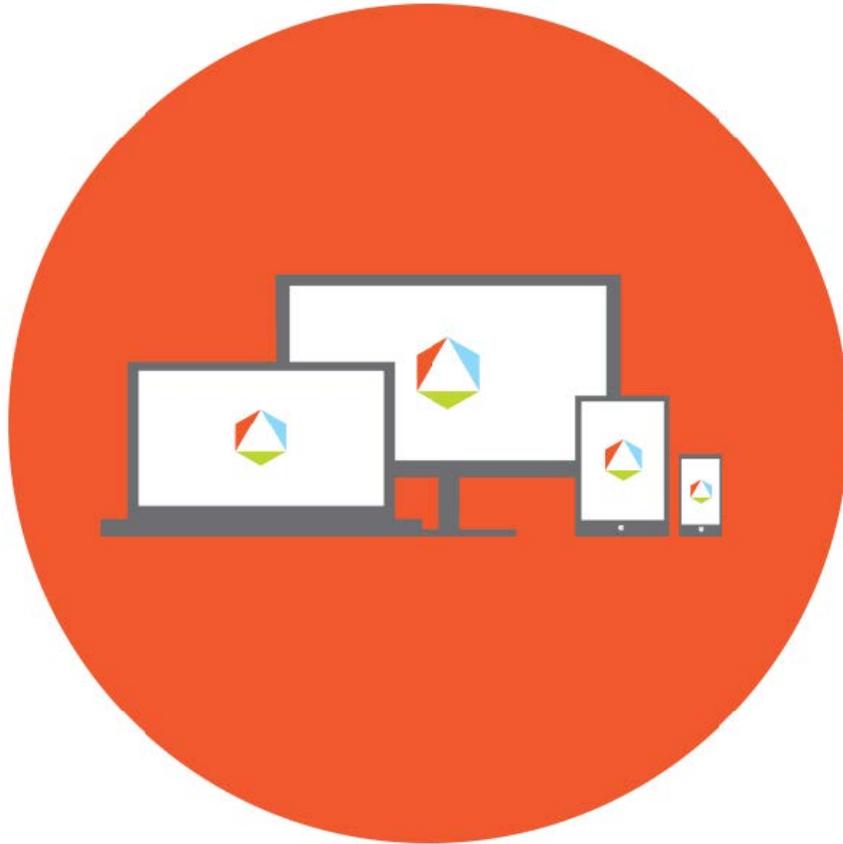




FIRSTPATH
AUTISM



Lesson Guide

Maladaptive Behavior: Meltdowns

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Maladaptive Behavior: Meltdowns

Overview

<p>Operational Definition:</p>	<p>Two or more (a "cluster") of inappropriate behaviors occurring during a behavioral outburst. Examples are: hitting others; kicking; flailing on floor; biting; head butting; pinching; screaming; crying; throwing objects; yelling profanities; and, other behaviors like these. Sometimes called a meltdown (or temper tantrum).</p>
<p>Function:</p>	<p>The purpose of the behavior can be sensory, escape, attention, and/or tangible.</p>
<p>General Strategies:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steps to Social Success would outline what the child can do instead of engaging in meltdown, such as appropriately asking for a break to escape a non-preferred situation or for a preferred toy. • Role-playing strategies are recommended to allow the child to practice what s/he can do instead of engaging in meltdown behaviors. • Giving the child clear expectations, including predictive notification of daily events and transitions. • If a meltdown occurs, if you can <u>safely</u> ignore the meltdown, do so. Once the child show signs of calming down, calmly redirect the child to an appropriate behavior using as few words as possible. If the child starts to meltdown again, again ignore as <u>safely</u> can be done, and repeat. • If meltdown cannot be safely ignored, and include aggression, as discretely as possible, quickly remove items that could be used as weapons, and remove peers from immediate area if necessary and as possible to do. • Safely block aggressive behavior towards self or others that may be occurring, only as needed, only as long as needed, and as calmly as possible. • Provide visual or gestural prompts of ways child can cope and de-escalate to a calmer state. • For verbal redirection, use as few words as possible and do not engage in bargaining or negotiating with

	<p>child. Use a calm, even monotone voice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not pay <u>extra or undue</u> attention to the meltdown itself (but never ignore the child – always ensure that you can safely monitor the child).• If you are in a community setting (such as at the store), and if you cannot tolerate the public display of a meltdown at the store, it is better to quickly and safely remove the child from the store than to give in to the meltdown. Giving in during a meltdown (such as giving the child the toy s/he is having a meltdown over) will only make meltdowns stronger and worse in the future. However, if the meltdown occurred because the child didn't want to be in the store, you have just reinforced that escape by taking the child out of the store. So, be mindful when deciding whether or not to remove a child from a public area during a meltdown.• Praise once child is “back on track”.• If the child was working on a task that you requested the child to do before starting the meltdown, continue with original activity/task.
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Teach

- Child to ask for help/assistance appropriately.
- Functional communication training (vocal speech; PECs; Sign Language) to teach the child to more appropriately ask for preferred items/activities and for a break from a task or to delay starting a task (e.g., 'Can I have one more minute on the computer, please?')
- If your child has exhibited meltdowns in community settings, teach and role play with your child appropriate behaviors while in these settings (such as at the store or when riding with you in the car). Make sure to plan the outings, prepare your child for what to expect while on the outing, have a visual schedule if needed of what will occur during the outing, and provide sufficient reinforcement for the child behaving well while on the outing. Keep the child engaged during the community trip and try to have as much fun as possible!
- Appropriate peer social interaction behaviors (including appropriate game play with peers and conflict resolution strategies).
- Appropriate expression of emotions (such as anger or sadness) and states of being (such as being tired or bored).
- Coping and waiting strategies (e.g., counting to 10; deep breathing).