

LOWER THE TEMPERATURE

A SIMPLE, THREE STEP SYSTEM FOR
CALM INTERVENTIONS IN HEATED
MOMENTS



First Things First

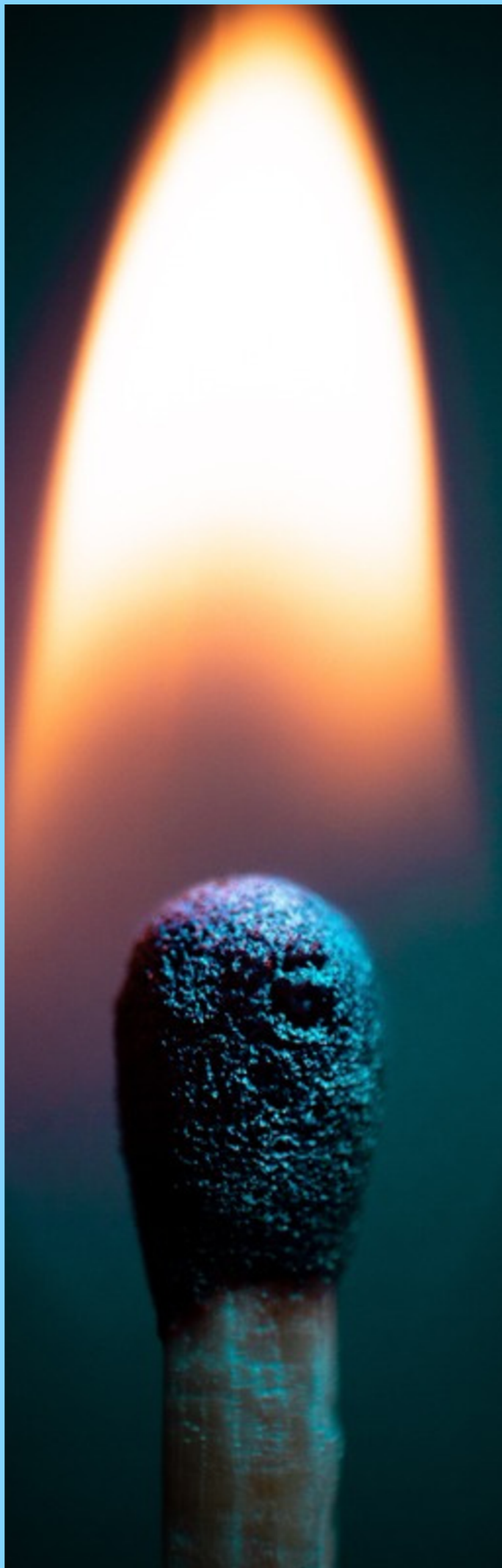


Welcome

Hi! I'm Jennifer. I created Childhoods Matter as a place to empower, educate, and encourage adults with practical and simple strategies for focusing on what matters AND sparking joy for themselves and the kiddos in their lives.

Because you're here, I know you are a teacher or caregiver who cares deeply about children, BUT perhaps, the behaviors they are throwing at you or the environments you are in have you engaged in more heated moments and negative interactions than you would like. I understand. Been there. And it's totally normal.

Understanding a little about the brain and some simple strategies can make a big difference. So let's dive right in. Your time is valuable.



Foundations

Where there's smoke - there is fire.

Taking time to notice the smaller things means we can not only intervene earlier and more effectively, but we have a chance of addressing the root issue instead of just the explosion.

You can't give what you don't have.

If we hope to teach and support children in regulating their emotions --- calming their bodies and controlling their behavior, we have to master those skills ourselves.

First things first.

Basic neuroscience and Maslow's hierarchy teach us that we have to create safety and connection before we can hope to address the logical mind.

Clear is kind.

For children, or anyone in a disrupted state - fewer words and direct words are always better. Whether addressing their needs or your own boundaries, say it straight.



01

STEP ONE - NOTICE

For all of us, but especially for children, responses to stress or trauma may come out in our bodies and behavior long before we are able to articulate what's wrong and long before our reactions to that stress or trauma could cause what would be considered a "problem" at home or in the classroom.

Taking time to notice more subtle signals of dysregulation can alert us to an increased need for

- *interactions that reinforce safety and connection,
- *opportunities for play or exercise
- *or time learning mindfulness or social emotional skills.

When stress is "too much" our primitive brain will work to protect us in the way it knows how. Picking up on the signs early allows us to prevent explosions and offer support when it is more easily received.



SIGNS OF DYSREGULATION

CHECKLIST

THE ITEMS BELOW ARE OFTEN SYMPTOMS OF DYSREGULATION IN CHILDREN. NOTICING THEM BEFORE THINGS GET HEATED ALLOWS YOU TO REINFORCE SAFETY AND CONNECTION TO PREVENT DISRUPTION AND SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH.

01	INCREASED SOMATIC COMPLAINTS (STOMACHACHES, HEADACHES, CHEST PAIN)	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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02	HYPERAROUSAL (SLEEP DISTURBANCES, EASILY STARTLED BY BELLS, PHYSICAL CONTACT, LIGHTING CHANGES, SUDDEN MOVEMENTS, DOORS SLAMMING ETC.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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03	HYPOAROUSAL (DECREASED ATTENTION AND CONCENTRATION, INCREASED FATIGUE, EMOTIONAL NUMBING)	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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04	AVOIDANCE BEHAVIORS (WITHDRAWAL FROM OTHERS AND ACTIVITIES, DECREASED ENGAGEMENT, FEAR AND RESISTANCE AROUND CERTAIN PEOPLE OR ACTIVITIES)	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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05	HEIGHTENED DIFFICULTY WITH AUTHORITY, REDIRECTION, OR CRITICISM	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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06	INCREASE IN IMPULSIVITY, RISK TAKING, OR ACTING OUT - CHANGE IN ABILITY TO INTERPRET AND RESPOND TO SOCIAL CUES	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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07	ANXIETY, FEAR, AND WORRY ABOUT SELF AND OTHERS - DISTRUST OF OTHERS	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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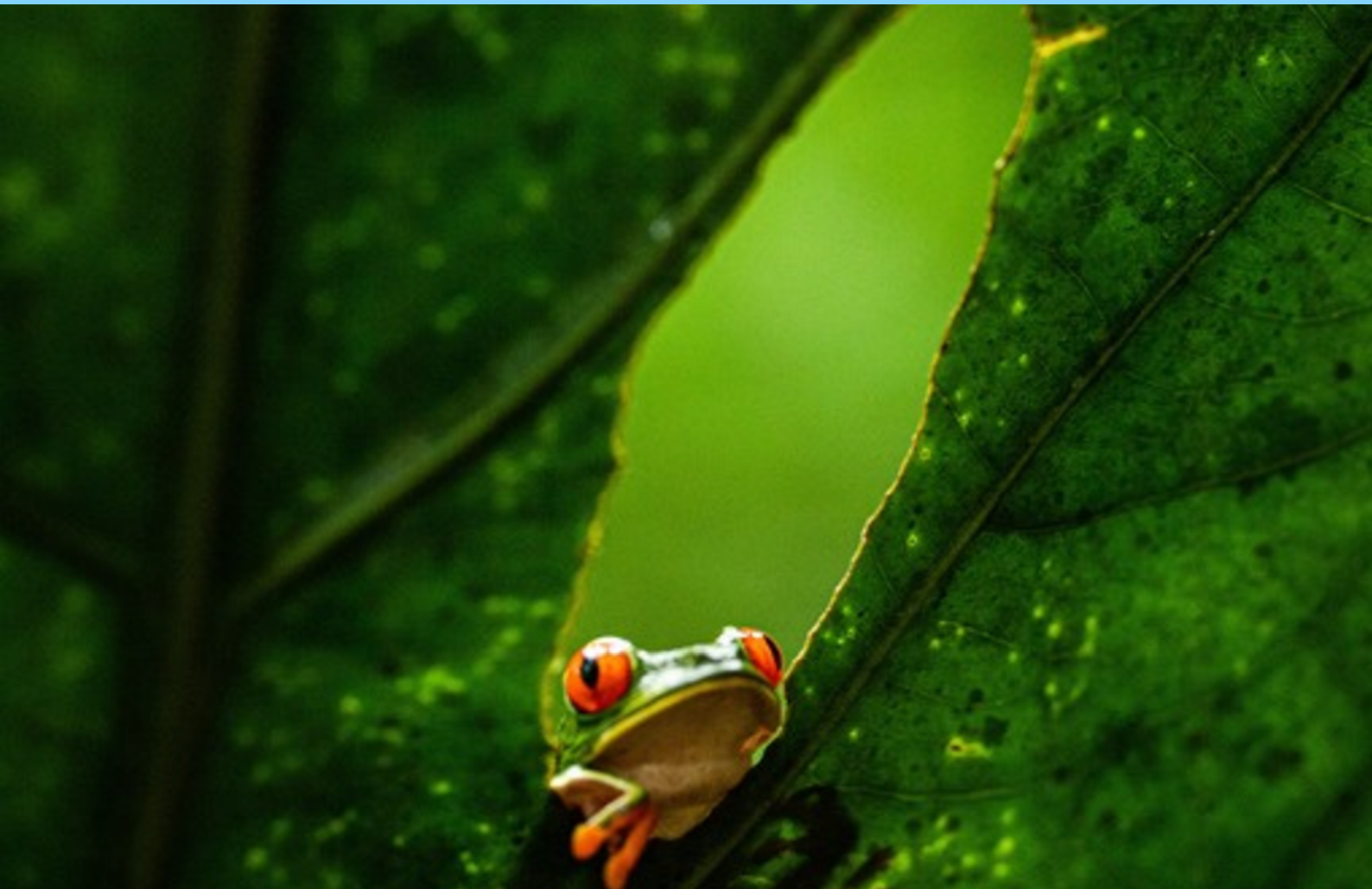
08	IRRITABILITY, FRUSTRATION, AND DIFFICULTY WITH TRANSITIONS	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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STEP TWO - CREATE SAFETY

02

When any of us are overwhelmed and dysregulated, we revert back to our most primitive brain. We return to a fight, flight, freeze, or fawn mentality that makes logical thought literally impossible. So whether we like it or not, putting out the fire means meeting the other person where they are and reinforcing their physical and emotional safety. So when things get hot (or very cold)-- keep first things first. The other strategies and conversation -- consequences and plans can happen later. Create safety first. and you will find a much quicker path toward resolution.



YOUR GO-TO LIST FOR DE-ESCALATION

CHILL APPROACHES FOR HEATED MOMENTS



FIND YOUR CALM

THIS CAN BE THE HARDEST PART AND WITHOUT IT, THE REST WON'T WORK.



SIMPLE STATEMENTS

"LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS LATER"
"I SEE WHERE YOU ARE COMING FROM"



ASK

"WHAT WOULD HELP YOU RIGHT NOW?"



LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND

REPEAT BACK WHAT THEY ARE SAYING TO ENSURE UNDERSTANDING "I HEAR YOU SAYING.....IS THAT RIGHT?"



GIVE SPACE

REMOVE AN AUDIENCE FROM THE CONVERSATION
OFFER THEM AN ESCAPE ROUTE



WALK

WALK AWAY IF NEEDED OR OFFER TO TAKE A WALK TOGETHER.



REMIND

LET THEM KNOW THAT THEY ARE NOT IN TROUBLE AND THAT YOU ARE READY TO HELP IF YOU CAN



DISTRACT

TALK ABOUT SOMETHING THEY LIKE OR USE HUMOR



03

STEP THREE - ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Many times, the constraints of our schedule or capacity and the persistent stress in our kids keeps us fighting the same fires day in and day out. And perhaps, feeling like nothing ever really changes. We might be right.

Addressing the "problem" behavior as it presents, is only the beginning. Real change requires trying to understand what root cause might be leading to those behaviors and then implementing strategies to address those.

Without that step, we may put out a fire only to have it reignite the very next day.

The good news is that you really don't have to be sure of the exact root cause --- because effective interventions include strategies that overlap multiple causes. The very act of considering these questions as you decide what's next will increase effectiveness exponentially so you can spend less time fighting fires.

DECIDING WHAT'S NEEDED

10 ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

WHILE YOU MAY NOT KNOW THE ANSWERS TO EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS, CONSIDER EACH AS YOU DECIDE WHAT SUPPORTS MAY BE NEEDED TO HELP THE CHILD MOVE FROM THEIR SURVIVAL BRAIN INTO THEIR THINKING BRAIN.

1. ARE THE CHILD'S PHYSICAL NEEDS BEING MET?

2. IS THERE ANYTHING IN THE ENVIRONMENT HERE THAT MIGHT BE CAUSING OR CONTRIBUTING TO THE PROBLEM?

3. HAVE THERE BEEN OPPORTUNITIES TO MOVE, LAUGH, OR BE MINDFUL RECENTLY?

4. AM I CALM, ALERT, AND READY TO SUPPORT THIS CHILD?

5. HAVE I INVESTED IN A CONNECTED, TRUSTED RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS CHILD?

6. HOW MUCH DO I KNOW ABOUT THIS CHILD'S LIFE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL?

7. AM I BRINGING A SENSE OF POSITIVE REGARD AND GENEROUS INTENTIONS TO THIS INTERACTION?

8. WHAT HAS THE RATIO BEEN OF POSITIVE TO NEGATIVE INTERACTIONS WITH THIS CHILD?

9. WILL MY NEXT MOVE BUILD OR BREAK TRUST?

10. WILL MY NEXT MOVE ADDRESS THE SHORT TERM PROBLEM OR START TO ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSE, OR BOTH?



SMOKE SIGNALS

READ THE SIGNS - DISCOVER THE SOURCE

1 SIGNS OF DISREGULATION
CAN ALERT YOU TO NEEDS
BEFORE AN EXPLOSION

2

DE ESCALATION
STRATEGIES CAN PUT OUT
THE FIRE TEMPORARILY



3 UNDERSTANDING ROOT CAUSE WILL GUIDE
STRATEGIES TOWARD LONG TERM CHANGE

WANNA LEARN MORE?



Our courses and resources offer encouragement, simple strategies, and practical resources that help you and help children live a life of connection, health, learning, and joy.

If you're ready for more, join our signature class, **Hitting Refresh**, where you can learn the impact of your own childhood on your adult behaviors and health, breakup with your stress and burnout, and create systems to ensure that you can show up for others without losing yourself.