



Trigger Tracker: Find What Sets Off Hard Moments

If it feels like hard moments come out of nowhere, there's almost always a trigger hiding in plain sight, it's just easy to miss when you're in the middle of the moment itself. A trigger tracker narrows the focus to just one question: what happened right before this started?

"The behavior is the part everyone sees. The trigger is the part that actually explains it."

HOW TO USE IT

- 1 Note only what happened in the 1–2 minutes right before.** Not the whole day's context.
- 2 Be specific.** Not "was upset," but "was told to turn off the tablet" or "sibling took a toy."
- 3 Track for at least a week, across different times of day.** Before drawing conclusions.
- 4 Include the environment, not just the event.** Noise level, how many people were around, how tired or hungry they were.

READING WHAT YOU'VE COLLECTED

- ☐ Sort entries by trigger type, not by date, the repeats will jump out faster.
- ☐ Cross-check triggers against time of day and hunger/tiredness, a trigger often only causes trouble when stacked with fatigue.
- ☐ Separate triggers you can avoid (a specific phrase, a rushed transition) from ones you can only prepare for (loud environments, unexpected changes).

TRY THIS

Before you even log the behavior, ask yourself one question first: "What was happening right before this started?" Write that answer down first, every time.

USING WHAT YOU FIND

For avoidable triggers, adjust your routine to sidestep them where it's reasonable to do so.

For unavoidable triggers, build in a warning or coping tool specifically for that situation.

Revisit the list every few weeks, triggers shift as kids grow and circumstances change.

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