



# When Screaming Won't Stop

Screaming is loud, it's public, and it's one of the hardest behaviors to stay calm through, which is exactly why it can be so effective for a child, even without meaning to be. Here's how to respond in a way that helps, rather than accidentally making it more likely to happen again.

**"The screaming is loud. Your response doesn't have to be."**

## IN THE MOMENT: WHAT TO DO

- 1 Get quieter, not louder, as they get louder.** Matching volume turns it into a contest neither of you can win.
- 2 Acknowledge briefly, then hold steady.** "I hear you're upset," once, rather than repeating yourself over their volume.
- 3 Move somewhere lower-stakes if you can.** A quieter room, away from an audience, without treating it as a punishment.
- 4 Wait it out.** Screaming almost always de-escalates faster when it isn't being fed more reaction, positive or negative.

## ONCE IT'S OVER

- ☐ Praise the shift back to a regular voice, specifically. "You brought your voice down, thank you."
- ☐ Talk through what they could try next time, once they're calm enough to actually take it in.
- ☐ Note the trigger and setting, screaming for attention looks and sounds different from screaming out of frustration, and they need different responses.

### TRY THIS

"I can help once your voice is at talking level." Say it once, calmly, then wait, don't repeat it into the noise.

## MAKING IT LESS NECESSARY

Teach and rehearse a replacement, an inside-voice signal, a card to hand you, a specific phrase, well before the next big feeling hits.

Respond promptly to a calm request, so there's less incentive to escalate to get noticed.

Build in regular one-on-one attention outside of hard moments, so screaming isn't the most reliable way to get you.