



The Calm-Down Card

For the moment it's all going sideways. Stick it on the fridge. When the storm hits, you don't have to think — just start at 1.

1

Steady yourself first

Your calm is the tool. One slow breath out, drop your shoulders, soften your voice before you say anything. A dysregulated child can't borrow calm you don't have yet.

2

Name it, don't fix it

Put words to the feeling instead of the behaviour. Naming it tells their brain they're safe and understood — the fastest way down from a peak.

"This is really hard right now. I'm right here."

3

Shrink the moment

Cut the demand down to one tiny, doable thing. Fewer words, one step. Big instructions bounce off a flooded brain; small ones land.

"Let's just put on one shoe. Only the left one."

4

Move, then reconnect

Change something physical — step outside, get a glass of water, shift rooms. Motion resets a stuck nervous system. Save the talking-about-it for later, when you're both settled.

WHEN THE STORM PASSES

No lecture, no post-mortem. A hard moment isn't a failure — theirs or yours. Repair with one warm sentence ("That was tough. I love you. We're okay."), and let the rest go. Tomorrow is a clean page.