

Before the Big Gathering

A gentle checklist for parties, dinners and visits. Routines, breaks and a heads-up about what's coming help young children cope (Boston Children's Health Physicians; Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse).

The day before / that morning

- ☐ Tell them what will happen: who, where, how long
- ☐ Show photos of the people and the house if you can
- ☐ Keep the nap (or quiet time) on the day
- ☐ Feed a real snack before you go
- ☐ Pack the calm kit (see below)
- ☐ Pick a quiet spot when you arrive
- ☐ Agree on a code word for "I need a break"
- ☐ Decide your leave-by time in advance

Our calm kit

- ☐ Comfort toy or blanket
- ☐ Headphones or ear muffs
- ☐ Familiar snack + water cup
- ☐ Small coloring book + crayons
- ☐ A favorite board book
- ☐ Spare clothes
- ☐ Squishy toy or play dough
- ☐ This page!

Our plan

Our code word: _____ Quiet spot: _____

We'll take a break at: _____ We'll leave by: _____

Who takes the break with them: _____

My Calm Choices

Cut out the cards and keep them in the calm kit. When your child starts to wind up, hold out two cards: "Headphones or dragon breaths?" Two choices are easier than ten.



Hug my lovey



5 dragon breaths



Headphones on



Quiet corner



Drink water



Walk outside with
a grown-up



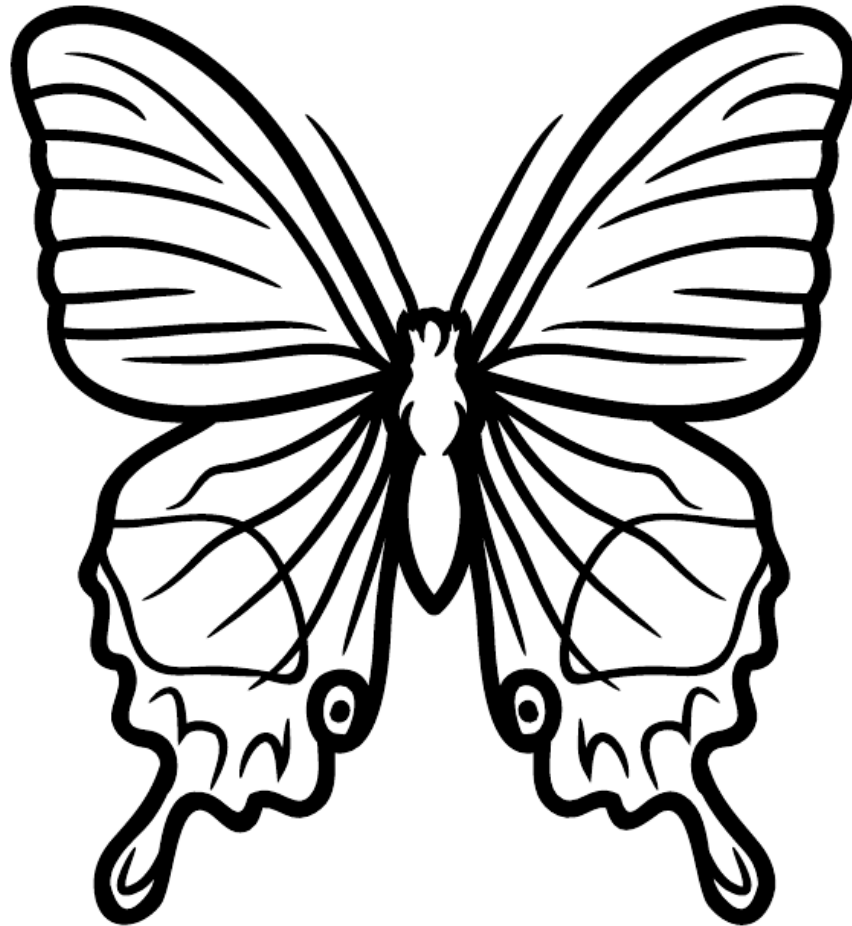
Color a butterfly



Big squeeze hug

Butterfly Breathing

Trace up one wing while you breathe in slowly, and down while you breathe out. Then color it in, from our *Magical Butterfly Coloring Book*.



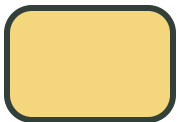
How full is my feelings cup? Point to how you feel.



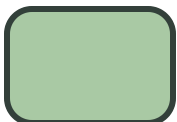
Too much! I need help



Wobbly and loud



Wiggly



Calm and ready