How to recognize and respond to big feelings

Help children name and validate their feelings

- Tummy aches and headaches
- Crying and irritability
- Trouble sleeping, nightmares, or terrors
- Sweaty hands
- Changes in eating habits
- Shortness of breath
- Clinginess, seeking attention
- Worrying about family members
- Repeated, frequent questions
- Fighting, arguing, or breaking things
- Avoiding certain behaviors or conversations

Comfort and speak soothingly

- It sounds like you might be feeling scared.
- It's ok to feel scared. I also feel scared sometimes.
- This feeling will pass.
- We are here and we will take care of you.

Help children manage their big feeling

- Let's dance to get our wiggles out!
- Let's belly-breathe to help us feel better.

Reduce big feelings in the future

- Limit exposure to news and social media.
- Provide positive information about what is causing the big feeling.

We are here and we will take care of you.

It's ok to feel scared. I also feel scared sometimes.

This feeling will pass.

We are here and we will take care of you.