



# MELTDOWN SUPPORT PLAN

---

A framework for understanding triggers and developing compassionate response strategies. Introduction: Every child's emotions tell a story. This worksheet helps families and educators understand what leads to a meltdown and how to respond with compassion, safety, and connection. Use it to observe, reflect, and build a plan that supports calm and confidence — for both the child and the adult. Section 1: Understanding the Individual

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Support Team (Parent/Teacher/Support Staff): \_\_\_\_\_

How this child communicates best:

☐ Words ☐ Gestures ☐ AAC device ☐ Visuals ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Signs I'm starting to feel overwhelmed: Examples: pacing, covering ears, avoiding eye contact, crying

\_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2: Identifying Triggers

Common triggers: ☐ Loud noises ☐ Transitions ☐ Bright lights ☐ Waiting ☐ Crowds ☐ Changes in routine ☐ Physical touch ☐ Other:

\_\_\_\_\_

Specific examples or patterns you've noticed:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Section 3: Early Signs & Co-Regulation Cues

Early warning signs (before a full meltdown):

\_\_\_\_\_

How adults can help early:

*Examples: reduce demands, use a calming tone, validate feelings. Calming phrases or visuals that work best: “You’re safe.” “You can take your time.” “I’m here.”*

-----

-----

#### **Section 4: During a Meltdown – Compassionate Response Plan Gentle Reminders for Adults:**

- ☒ Stay calm and speak softly
- ☒ Remove extra sensory input
- ☒ Validate feelings — not behavior
- ☒ Ensure safety first
- ☐ Don’t argue or raise your voice
- ☐ Don’t take behavior personally

My response plan:

1. What I’ll do first: \_\_\_\_\_
2. What I’ll say (if anything): \_\_\_\_\_
3. Safe space location: \_\_\_\_\_
4. When to seek extra support: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Section 5: Recovery & Reconnection**

After the meltdown:

- ☐ Allow quiet space and time
- ☐ Offer a sensory/calming tool
- ☐ Reconnect through gentle activity
- ☐ Reflect when calm (“What helped you feel better?”)

Adult reflection:

- What triggered this episode?
- What worked best?
- What can we change next time?

#### **Section 6: Building Resilience**

Coping strategies to practice daily:

- Visual schedules □ Movement breaks □ Breathing exercises □ Sensory time □ Predictable routines
- Positive affirmations

**Strengths to celebrate:**

**Affirmations for adults:**

“Connection before correction.”

“I can stay calm even when things feel hard.”

“We’re both learning together.”

*Together, we nurture calm, confidence, and connection*

*For more information & Resources go to [www.theislandautismcoach.com](http://www.theislandautismcoach.com)*