



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