



# Having Big Feelings

**For preschoolers, having big feelings can happen a lot. Learning how to manage them is an important skill that will help them as they continue to grow and develop.**

Kids at this age are starting to know that any emotion can feel big. But they are also learning that they can use skills or go to trusted grown-ups to help the big feeling pass.

When Rocco the hedgehog was having big feelings of sadness and anger, he started to cry. He learned that there are many different things he could do to help with big feelings, like taking some deep breaths, counting to three, using words to name his feelings, or getting a hug from someone safe. These actions can help a big feeling pass. They also help us see that we can get through even the biggest of feelings and give us a little space to figure out what to do next.

## Summary of key skills from the video

- Everyone has big feelings sometimes, and that's okay.
- Big feelings can make us want to act before we stop and think.
- But there are a lot of things we can do — like taking deep breaths or hugging a safe person — that can help us calm down so we can decide what to do next.

## PRACTICE SKILLS

- Tell your child that it's okay to feel what they are feeling. This helps them feel heard and understood, and teaches them that they can handle big feelings.

“ I hear how upset that made you feel, and I can understand why.”

- Model healthy ways to deal with big feelings. This means showing and telling them about the things you do when you feel a strong emotion.

“ I'm feeling a big feeling, so I'm going to take some deep breaths to help me calm down.”

“ I feel frustrated right now. I'm going to take a break and then come back to this when I feel a less frustrated.”

- When your child is calm, discuss things they can do when they are feeling big emotions. Be specific about what they can try in different situations.

- When your child does one of those things to ride out a big feeling, give them praise in the moment. It's important to do this every time. These reminders help make using these skills a habit. You might say:



“I see you were feeling overwhelmed, and I love how you're hugging your stuffy to calm down.”

“I like how you're taking a break to help with big feelings.”

“Thank you for counting to three with me and taking big breaths.”

### START WITH THIS →

- Start by letting your child know that feeling big feelings is normal, and that sharing them with you is a great first step to handle them.
- When your child is in a calm place, make a plan for big feelings before they happen. Ask your child if there are things or activities that would help them deal with a big feeling – like hugging a favorite stuffed animal or taking a few deep breaths. Knowing a safe thing to reach for when you need to calm down makes you more likely to do it.

# Having Big Feelings

🎵 *Big feelings, they come and they go.* 🎵

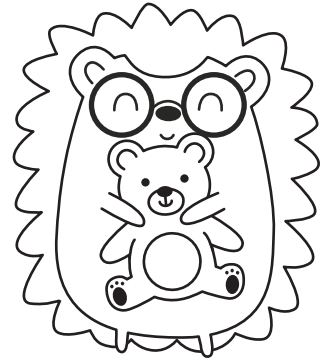
Below are a variety of skills YOU can use to help with having big feelings.  
Think about a time when you could use each of the skills below.



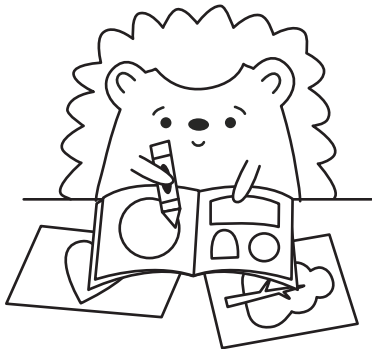
Count to three



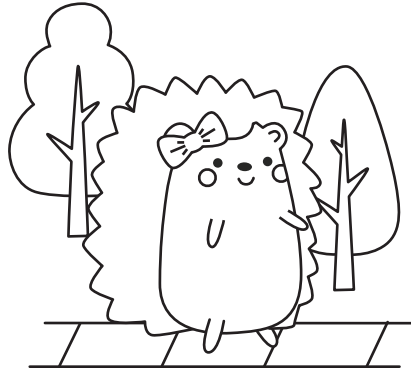
Take a deep breath



Hug a stuffed animal



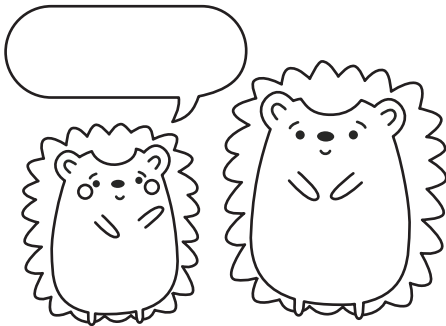
Draw or color a picture



Take a break or walk



Listen, dance, or sing to music



Talk to a trusted grown-up



Get a drink of water

What do you like to do when you have big feelings?

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