

How Parents Can Accidentally Set Off Neurodivergent Kids & Easy Ways to Fix It



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“Keep yourself calm, and you’ll have a better chance of keeping your kids calm.”

Acknowledge, don’t dismiss

Prevention is key, though it’s not always possible. It’s important to **know your child’s triggers**—like getting overwhelmed at the end of the day, during homework, or when they’re expected to sit still for too long. By noticing these patterns, you can plan ahead, like bringing a colouring book to long dinners.

Do they often melt down at the end of the day? Struggle with homework because they can’t focus and hate sitting at the table? Have trouble sitting still for long periods? If they can’t handle an hour-long family dinner, try bringing a colouring book, letting them read after a bit, or allowing them to move around before coming back.

If a meltdown does happen, try to understand what your child’s behaviour is communicating. Instead of reacting, ask yourself what they’re trying to tell you. Maybe they’re having trouble sitting still or feeling overwhelmed. Acknowledge their feelings—say something like, *“I know it’s hard; let’s do this together”*.

ADHD, anxiety and trauma

ADHD, anxiety and trauma can look similar. All three can cause focus problems. Think about how stress makes us forget things; it’s the same for kids. They also share sleep issues—trouble falling asleep, waking up a lot, or nightmares. Intrusive thoughts are common too, but they vary. ADHD might cause random thoughts, while anxiety or trauma brings worries or fears.

Restless behaviour, like fidgeting, might look like ADHD, but it could also be anxiety or trauma. ADHD usually shows more physical hyperactivity, while anxiety makes kids hyper-aware, craving predictability and avoiding new things. Pay attention to your **child’s behaviour and family history** of ADHD. If multiple issues are present, get a professional’s help to find the best support.