

WHAT IS AN AFTER SCHOOL MELTDOWN OR AFTER SCHOOL RESTRAINT COLLAPSE?

After-school restraint collapse

Sometimes called the 'coke bottle' effect

During school



After school

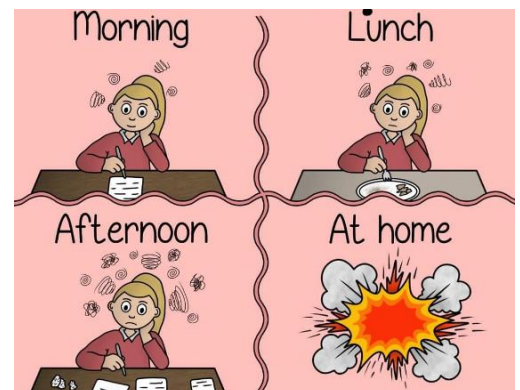


School can be an overwhelming environment for some children due to the noise, busy environment and expectations. Some children are able to hold it together in the day at school but when they get home the emotions, feelings, anxiety that they have felt throughout the day are released causing a meltdown/shut down.

A bit like a coke bottle when we shake it - it will contain the "fizz" for a while but at some point it will explode out the top!

Sometimes a child will be ok throughout the day and some situations and at other times things will layer up and then combine to make a bigger reaction. Each incident on its own may be small but together they are huge!

It is important to remember that we all "Mask" throughout the day – as adults we have learnt how to deal with each of these emotions. Children need support to do this and home is often the "safe" place where they can show their true feelings



WHAT CAN HELP?

- Don't overload with questions straight away – let them talk to you about the day when they are ready.
- Consider whether they may be hungry and give them a snack – "HANGER" is real and makes it harder to manage feelings/emotions.
- Give your child time to regulate. Plan an activity that will help get the emotions out in a positive way. This may be doing something physical such as running, riding a bike, jumping on a trampoline or it may be a quiet activity such as drawing, craft, reading. Use whatever interests your child to find a way to regulate and provide time to process their emotions.
- Have a safe quiet space that your child can go to when they get in so they are not overwhelmed by the noise of a busy household
- Be patient and try not to take the outburst personally. It can be difficult but remember your child is behaving this way because they feel safe to show their true feelings at home.
- Talk about the emotions and how to manage the feelings at the time. We all have our own strategies that help when someone frustrates us, something doesn't go as planned or we feel anxious. Discuss how to deal with each situation to prevent the "layering effect" and saving it up till the end of the day.



It's important we have a safe space to let out our overwhelm and stress

OTHERS RESOURCES TO HELP

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z863cxs>
- <https://ricepsychology.com/behavior/the-after-school-restraint-collapse-helping-your-child-overcome-their-emotional-buildup-from-school/>
- <https://www.mindfullittleminds.com/after-school-meltdowns-why-they-happen-and-what-to-do-about-it/>