

# "THE AFTER-SCHOOL SURVIVAL GUIDE."

NAVIGATING MELTDOWNS,  
TANTRUMS, AND OVERWHELM



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YOUTH SERVICES

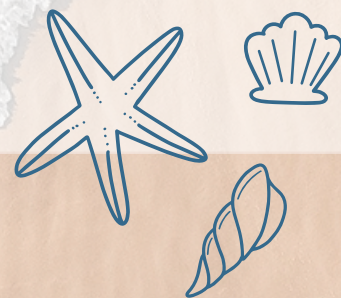


Navigating The Waves of Life Together

The school day is over, and your child walks through the door. For many parents, this is the moment the emotional "floodgates" open.

The stress, anxiety, and exhaustion of the day all come out, and you're left to deal with the after-school meltdown.

It's not defiance—it's overwhelm. This guide offers three simple steps to help you both navigate this moment with calm and connection.



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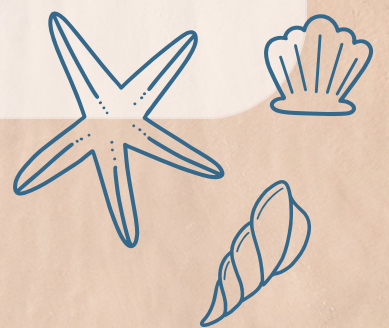
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## Welcome the Feelings

When your child erupts, your first instinct might be to fix it, or to say, "School wasn't that bad." Instead, welcome the feelings. The message you send is, "This is a safe space for you to let go."

- Try saying: "I see you're feeling really overwhelmed right now, and of course, you are. You've spent the whole day working really hard. It makes sense you're feeling overwhelmed."



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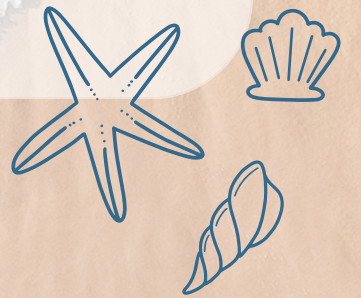
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## Connect Before Correcting

Meltdowns are often a call for connection. Before you ask about their day or try to solve a problem, give them a hug or just sit with them in silence. This simple act of presence shows them you're their anchor.

- Try saying: "I'm here. You don't have to talk about it right now. I've got you."



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## Provide a Safe Sensory Outlet

After the initial wave passes, offer a way for them to release that built-up energy. This redirects their frustration into a healthy, physical outlet.

### Ideas to try:

Give them a pillow to punch or scream into.

Hand them a stress ball or a piece of playdough.

Take a quick walk outside, even if it's just to the end of the driveway.

Kick a ball around



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## Have a snack ready

Have something ready to pull out of the fridge. Sometimes the feelings could be coming from feeling “Hangry”.



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## Calming Activities

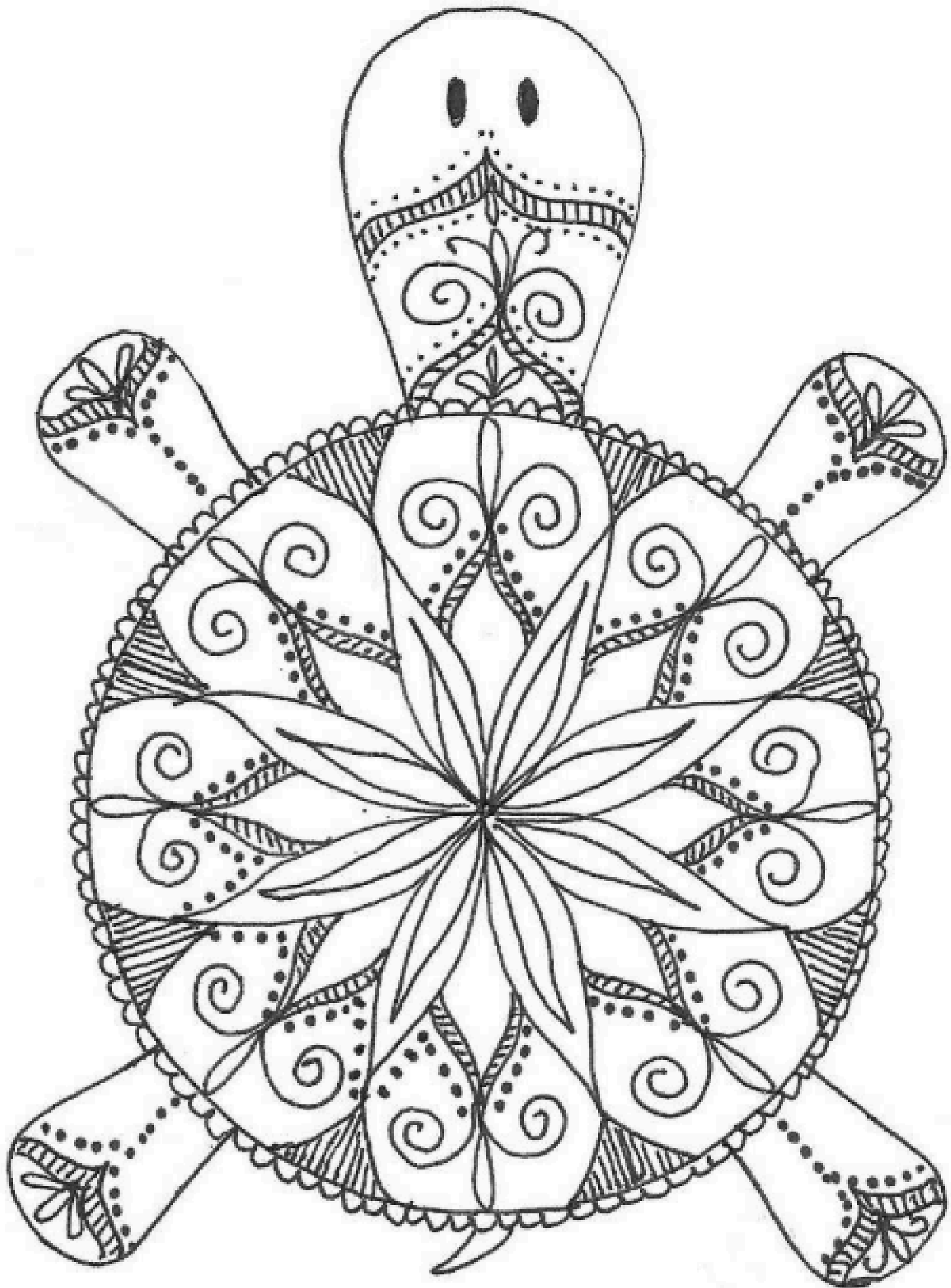
Sometimes kids/teens won't want to talk to you or go and do their homework straight away and that's ok. Providing a calm activity gives them a way to de-stress without verbal communication.



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# Mindfulness

Trace along the rainbow with your finger as you breathe in and out



5-4-3-2-1 mindfulness list

- 5 things you can touch
- 4 things you can see
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

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