



Children with special needs may not process information in the same manner as typically developing children. Their coping responses may also differ. Some children may engage in self-soothing behaviors that offer a sense of control and calm when under stress. Strategies to support children with special needs should be accessible to the child and within their developmental level of ability. Providing increased transition time between activities is also helpful. Understanding that any increase in challenging or difficult behaviors is actually a form of communication related to stress, discomfort, and routine — change is helpful when attempting to address these behaviors.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

ALL AGES

HOW TO HELP



Offer ready access to comfort and sensory needs.

Present information in small doses and within child's level of understanding.

Make the unpredictable more predictable via use of routines and daily check-ins about plans and expectations. Use visual symbols to promote understanding and review frequently.

Encourage a sense of mastery by focusing on what the child can versus cannot do within the areas of developmentally appropriate play, educational activity, emotional expression and exercise.

Limit unhealthy preoccupations by providing concrete factual information, healthy and creative outlets for worry, setting limits, and through distraction.