



# My Calm Anchor



A simple way to help your child find calm again – at any age

By Ami Ford – Children's and Adult therapist, and  
author of *Lala and the Magic of Anchoring*

Every parent knows those moments when big feelings take over. Your child is upset or overwhelmed, and the words that usually comfort them just can't seem to reach them.

There's a gentle reason for this. When a child is flooded with emotion, the part of the brain that listens and reasons takes a little break. What helps most in that moment is feeling safe and steady again – and that's something you can offer simply by being there.

My Calm Anchor is a small tool you and your child create together in a few minutes. Once it's ready, they can use it anywhere – before a test, at the school gate, when worries begin to grow, or before sleep – to find their way back to calm.

You'll build yours over the next few pages.





# Making your Calm Anchor



Find a quiet moment together – bedtime and car rides work well.  
Then guide your child through these three steps.

1

## REMEMBER A LOVELY MOMENT

Ask your child to think of a time they felt really calm, happy or proud. Help them bring it to life. What could they see? What could they hear? How did it feel in their body?

*My calm moment is...*

*A favourite place, a happy day, a proud moment, a time you felt brave...*

2

## CHOOSE YOUR ANCHOR

While they're enjoying that feeling, ask them to do one small action – squeezing two fingers together, pressing a palm, touching a bracelet. This becomes their anchor.

Choose an action your child does not use all the time, so they stay connected to this particular feeling. Think of it like creating a pathway in the brain. Each time your child practises their Calm Anchor, that pathway becomes a little stronger.

*My anchor is...*



### 3

#### USE IT AGAIN AND AGAIN

Repeat the two steps once or twice a day for the next week, particularly when your child is already feeling settled.

Each time, the feeling and the action grow more connected - making it easier for your child to reconnect with the feeling they've chosen whenever they need it.



*Like any new skill, My Calm Anchor becomes more effective with practice. The more often it's used during calm moments, the easier it is for your child to reconnect with that feeling when they need it most.*





# Using your Calm Anchor



Once the anchor feels familiar, your child can use it whenever they'd like a little help finding calm.

Some moments where it may be helpful:

- Before something new or big – a test, a first day, a dentist visit
- At the school gate, when goodbyes feel wobbly
- When big feelings arrive, as they begin to settle
- At bedtime, when busy thoughts make it hard to drift off

**A gentle note:** *the anchor works best when it's been practised in calm, happy moments first. In the middle of a storm, your child may need you close before they can use it – and that's fine. The more it's practised, the sooner it comes to hand.*



## MAKING IT FIT YOUR CHILD'S AGE

**For younger children – keep it playful.** The anchor can be magic. Practise it with a teddy, choose a big action like a hand on the heart, and celebrate together when they use it.

**For older children and teens – keep it quiet.** A thumb and finger pressed together in a pocket works anywhere, and nobody else needs to know. Let them choose their moment and their action; the more it belongs to them, the more they'll use it.

You know your child best, so trust your own version of this. However you use your Calm Anchor, that's the right way for your family.





# A note for you



My Calm Anchor is your child's, and it can help you too. When you guide them through the three steps, you slow down and breathe more steadily yourself.

Children pick up on our calm - helping them find theirs often brings back a little of your own.

Some parents like to make their own Calm Anchor too. You're very welcome to.

## WAYS TO WORK WITH ME

- **One-to-one support** - I help children, teenagers and parents understand anxiety, manage overwhelming feelings and build practical tools they can use beyond the therapy room. Sessions are available in Wiltshire and online. You'll find details at [wiltshirefamilytherapy.co.uk](http://wiltshirefamilytherapy.co.uk)
- **Read the book** - Aimed at children aged 3-7 years, *Lala and the Magic of Anchoring* tells the story behind this tool.

**ORDER YOUR COPY**

SCAN TO ORDER



- **Stay in touch** - I share simple tools like this one in my emails, so keep an eye on your inbox.
- **Say hello on socials** - I'd love to hear from you telling me how your child, or you, chooses to create or use their calm anchor.

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