💡 Eight-step method to stop an ADHD 'meltdown'

Use this eight-step method to stop your child from having an ADHD 'meltdown':

1. **Keep your child balanced.** Make sure they get enough sleep, eat regular and healthy meals, and have enough 'down time' or 'me time' to reduce stress

2. **Pick your battles**, and be clear to your child – and yourself – about your expectations

3. **Follow a routine.** Children with ADHD need structure. Their behaviour will be less erratic if they know what they're expected to do and when they're expected to do it. For example, decide whether homework is done before or after dinner. Then stick to your routines as much as possible

4. **Set expectations.** Before it's time for a change – such as turning off the TV and getting ready for bed or stopping a game and coming in for dinner – give your child a count-down warning. The same goes when leaving the house – warn them 10 minutes beforehand

5. **Stay calm.** If your child does have a 'meltdown', it may be hard for you to stay calm, especially if your child is acting up in a public place. But it won't help the situation if you're both worked up. Try to talk quietly to your child; don't shout – seeing you acting normally may help your child calm down

6. **Be understanding.** If you see that your child is getting upset, ask what's wrong. Acknowledge what the child tells you and explain that you can understand their point of view. Thoughtfully repeating what the child said may help – children can find it reassuring that someone understands their concern

7. **Encourage deep breaths.** Deep breathing can be relaxing and can help relieve the stress that caused the 'meltdown' in the first place

8. **Set rules for 'meltdowns.'** No matter how hard you try to avoid them, angry outbursts are bound to happen. When it's over and calm is restored, you and your child should discuss what happened, and agree what to do if they get upset or angry in the future. Then when there is an emotional outburst, carry out your agreement. Your child is more likely to come out of it more quickly if they know what to expect