



6 Easy Ways to Turn Around a Bad Day

1. TAKE CARE OF BASIC NEEDS. Take care of yourself too. Comfortable people are far less grumpy.

- Has everyone, including you, eaten some decent food recently?
- Has everyone had water today?
- Is anyone too cold or too hot? Maybe coming down with a cold or seasonal allergies?

2. GIVE 10 MINUTES FOCUSED ATTENTION. Filling kids' attention cup can help you get a break too.

- Read Together - Grab a pile of books and read together on the couch until the pile is gone. Hold the grumpiest child on your lap or right next to you to increase their feeling of connection and calm.
- Play a game - We keep a variety of board games and card games around that are fun for everyone.
- Color together - Get out drawing supplies and tell a story about something that happened this week, listen to music, or put on an audio book while everyone colors. Try working on a drawing together.

3. DO SOME SENSORY PLAY. Keep a list of quick sensory ideas so you always have an easy activity.

- Playdough is a miracle worker. You might include plastic animals, beads, straws, or cookie cutters.
- Water play – include cups and a couple drops of food color. Finger paint in the tub. Give a shower or a bath with lavender oil and calming music.
- Make a quick sensory bin – put cornmeal, oats, salt or beans in a baking dish and let your kids swish their hands through, give them toy cars or spoons to play with in the sensory bin.

4. HEAD OUTSIDE. "There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing." ~ Ranulph Fiennes

- Go look for five signs of the season in your yard.
- Walk around the block. Try to find a bird.
- Or just take out the garbage together – do something to change the scenery.

5. GET SILLY. Our kids live in their imaginations, let this help you.

- Change a chore into a story. "Oh my gosh!!! I just realized the grouchy ghost came into our house! We've got to grab all these blocks and hide them from him or we'll all be grouchy! Fast!"
- Pretend to tickle away the grumpies.
- Loudly and suddenly declare, "Stop! It's time to....dance like a camel!" or "Talk like a Pirate!" or "Tell your best joke!" or "See who can go cross-eyed and stick out their tongue."

6. TAKE A TIME OUT. Sometimes we need to give ourselves a time out to hit the reset button on our day.

- Call a friend. Conversation with another adult can help you remember that you're not alone, and maybe it will give you an idea how to change the situation. I have a friend who sometimes get calls from me that start, "Hi. I'm calling you to keep myself from screaming at my kids right now...."
- Stop trying to fix the situation, make sure kids are in a safe spot, separated if need be, and go in the other room. Ignore the screaming or hammering on the door unless someone is hurt. Breathe and plan your next move. You don't have to be a Happy Parent in order not to be a Yelling Parent.

You do not need to be perfect. Everybody has bad days; most of us have dealt with parenting rage and parenting guilt, but that doesn't make us bad parents, just life-long learners – growing through our mistakes. When you notice something needs to change, you are empowered to make that change!

**"Though no one can go back and make a brand new start,
anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending." ~ Carl Bard**