



RESPONSES

Freeze Strategy

Once you have determined the child's most frequently used safety strategy, you can use this list to select responses that will help the child find safety in other ways, bearing in mind the child's emotional needs and the boundaries of your relationship.

- Make tasks smaller and more predictable. Take opportunities to collaborate with the child on tasks.
- Encourage the child to keep a journal with writing and artwork that will help them feel more connected to their feelings.
- Teach ways to get in touch with one's senses such as snuggling in a blanket, walking barefoot outdoors, or doing gardening work.
- Teach the child to ground themselves by periodically lifting their feet off the floor and returning their feet and noting the sensations.
- If the child wanders away from you, bring them back to you using a quiet voice or a gentle touch.
- If the child appears disconnected from their immediate surroundings, gently remind them who they are and what they are doing.
- Help the child enjoy being in their body with activities such as jumping, climbing, or hanging.
- Provide a sand tray for grounding and imaginative, symbolic play.
- If you see the child daydreaming when they are supposed to be involved in a group experience, gently remind the child privately what they are supposed to be doing.
- If the child can tolerate contact and it is appropriate for your relationship, gently touch them from time to time.
- Help the child gather tools (e.g. schedules, lists, post-it notes) and develop organizational and reminder systems to keep themselves oriented and on schedule.
- Set up a regular sleeping / eating schedule.