



STEPS FOR RESPONDING TO OVERWHELMED CHILDREN



Government
of South Australia



1. STAY CALM

Body language: relaxed, open. Approach side-on rather than face-to-face.

Voice: Keep your voice calm and level



2. ACKNOWLEDGE EMOTIONS

e.g.
"[name], I wonder if you are feeling [emotion] right now."
"[name], you look like you might be feeling [emotion]."



3. PROVIDE REASSURANCE

e.g.
"I'm here to listen to you."
"I'm here to support you."

Avoid directives "you need to calm down/be quiet."



4. OFFER GUIDANCE

e.g.
"Let's put that down and go over to the bench together."
"Come over here with me so I can listen better."



5. ALLOW TIME

It will take a bit of time for them to come back into their 'window'. Stay with them. Be patient and reassuring.



6. SET OUT NEXT STEPS

To support their re-entry to the activity (if appropriate).

e.g.
"We are watching our team mates while we wait in line."
"Have a drink break and return to the group."

