

H.A.L.T.

HUNGRY, ANGRY, LONELY AND TIRED

A SIMPLE TOOL FOR BETTER DAYS

A day in the life of a parent is filled with maintaining routines, making meals, cleaning up messes, entertaining curious minds, getting children to and from the places they need to be and keeping up with their child's energy – all while meeting other responsibilities and their own personal care needs. Children use energy while playing, exploring, learning about the world and trying to meet a myriad of adult expectations.

With all of this happening, it is no surprise that sometimes children or their caregivers can become frazzled and have a meltdown moment. Difficult moments can be avoided or shortened by remembering to **HALT** and consider what might be driving the meltdown. Simply put, when the adult notices things are not going well or senses escalation, it is helpful to stop and consider whether the child, parent or both might be hungry, angry, lonely or tired. All of these conditions weaken the connections in the brain that enable children and adults to stay calm and manage their behaviors.



Young children need adults to do this because they are not yet able to monitor, communicate about or handle being hungry, angry, lonely or tired on their own. On the back are some examples of using **HALT** to prevent or shorten meltdown moments.

Examples on back



HUNGRY

Provide regular, nutritious meals and snacks that keep blood sugar levels stabilized throughout the day. Limiting sugar and junk foods will help stabilize blood sugar. Proper hydration is also important for maintaining the right balance of the brain chemicals that help keep us calm.



ANGRY

Even though adults have more experience and brain development to help cope with anger, this is a big emotion for every age. Adults can help children by explaining expectations before situations that might trigger anger. For example, a parent can explain, “We are going to play with Robbie. I know that sometimes he grabs toys and you feel angry when that happens. It is OK to feel angry. When you feel angry, come to me for a hug to help you feel better.” When children become angry, first provide comfort and help them to feel calm before addressing any behavior issues. Children will learn more from the experience if they are calm before you talk about their reactions or misbehaviors.



LONELY

Humans of all ages require attention from others and positive interactions that help them feel connected to others. Sometimes young children act out because they crave attention or need adults to help them feel calm again. It is helpful to plan regular connection times with children to meet these needs before misbehavior starts. Connection times can include eating a meal together without electronics, playing or coloring, reading a book, talking about their day and taking some time to snuggle.



TIRED

Good sleep habits and getting the recommended amount of sleep are important for everyone. Children may need more sleep and more understanding when they experience situations that require extra energy from them, like a growth spurt, becoming overstimulated or having a more active or full day than usual.



**HOFANTI
CHOKMA**

The Chickasaw Nation
Hofanti Chokma Program
“To Grow Well”

Chickasaw.net/GrowWell



the
**Chickasaw
Nation**