

**Responding to Children in Crisis**  
**Application: Bringing it Home**

1. Keep a journal of the child's behaviors for one week and see if you can identify times of the day, changes in the routine, or certain activities that seem to be a trigger for the child. Review the journal and then develop a plan on how to alleviate some of the factors that seem to trigger the child.
2. The next time you begin to notice that the child is becoming escalated, write down the answers to three quick questions: 1) what am I feeling right now; 2) what does the behavior communicate to me about what the child needs and wants; 3) how can I best respond to this situation to prevent the child from becoming more escalated.
3. Read the case scenario below and list three things that you could do to calm the child and prevent him/her from further escalating.

Case Scenario: Johnny walked in the door and slammed it hard. He threw down his backpack and turned to you and yelled, "I am not going to do any homework today and I am never going back to that school." Johnny then stormed down the hall and slammed his bedroom door and cranked up his music very loud.

4. Keep a record for one week of how you respond to the child you are fostering or adopting when he/she begins to escalate. After recording your responses, see if you can put in place the 10 count rule where you take a deep breath and then slowly count to 10 before responding to the child. Try this practice for one week and record if it made any difference in the child's patterns related to escalation.
5. Develop a plan that lays out the steps that will be followed by all family members when a child is getting escalated and/or is in the crisis phase. Remember the 3 Rs when developing the plan (See the resources for this theme for a handout on the 3 Rs). The plan can include items such as: 1) people (internal and external to the family) who can be contacted for assistance during these times; 2) contact information of therapists and other supports in the community that you may need to contact; 3) where other children and/or pets in the home should go once the child starts escalating and 4) strategies that have worked to help the child calm down (i.e. listening to music, drinking a soda, having time alone). There is an example of a safety plan in the resource section of this theme that can be used as a template to develop a plan.
6. Identify a few strategies that you can put in place when the child you are fostering or adopting has entered into the recovery phase. Think of things that are calming to the child and also establish bonding (i.e., eating some type of food, reading a book together, going on a walk).
7. Take time after a crisis has passed to sit down with the child you are fostering or adopting and talk calmly with the child about what he/she thinks caused the crisis,

how he/she felt during that time, and can be done in the future to prevent him/her from getting that upset.

8. Think of a time that you experienced a situation that scared you. Was your response to flee, fight or freeze? Write down the situation and your response so that you can share it with the child you are fostering or adopting as an example of the flight-fight-freeze response.