



Stimming at Home & in Public



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A practical guide for parents



FIRST: UNDERSTAND THE FUNCTION

Stimming is **not** misbehavior. It usually has one of these reasons:



Regulation

- calming the nervous system



Sensory input

- seeking movement, *sound*, or *texture*



Communication

- expressing excitement, anxiety, or need.



Coping

- managing overwhelm or transitions

→ Your response should *match the function*.

WHEN TO SUPPORT vs. WHEN TO REDIRECT



AT HOME

✓ SUPPORT WHEN:

- ✓ It helps them regulate and stay calm
- ✓ It happens during waiting or downtime
- ✓ It is not harming anyone or damaging property
- ✓ It is somewhat quiet and safe

Offer sensory items: fidgets, putty, resistance bands, weighted toys.
Use visuals for breaks and expectations.



KEEP IN MIND:

“Stimming is a nervous system response, not a defiant act.

Seek regulation first, then support safe alternatives.”



IN PUBLIC

→ REDIRECT WHEN:

- ✓ It is very loud in a quiet place
- ✓ It risks hurting the child or others
- ✓ It escalates and causes distress
- ✓ It poses a safety risk (*while crossing, needing hands*)

→ Low, respectful language: “Hands help here.”

→ Replace: offer an alternative stim, movement, or *squeezing hug*

→ Guide gently: to a safe spot, offer break, or distract with a favorite item

FOR COMMON CHALLENGES

INSTEAD OF STOPPING, TRY:

- ✓ **Quiet stim:** Stress ball, fidget, neck wrap
- ✓ **Calm space:** Tent, shaded area, headphones
- ✓ **Sensory breaks:** Playground, pressure, gum

AFTER DYSREGULATION:

- ✓ Allow **quiet** stimming or movement time
- ✓ Offer comfort (water, hug, break to recover)