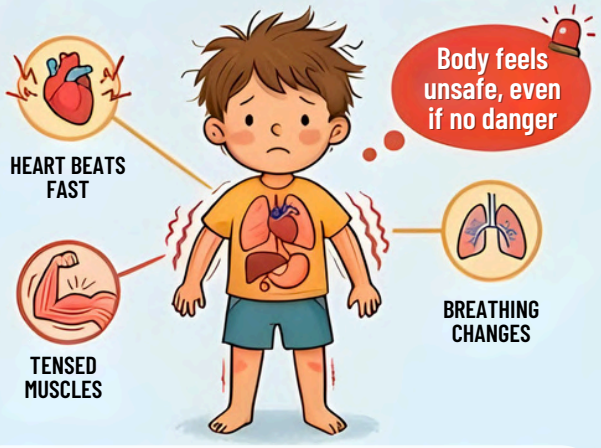
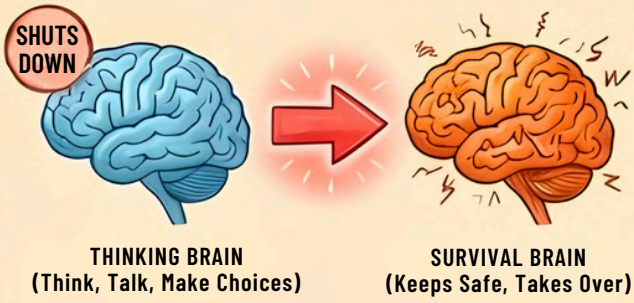
Why a Child Can't Calm Down on Command

1. The child's body goes into stress mode



When a child feels too much at once, their heart beats fast, their muscles tighten, and their breathing changes. Their body is saying it doesn't feel safe, even when nothing dangerous is happening.

2. The brain switches from thinking to survival



The brain has two main jobs. When overwhelmed, the survival part takes over. The thinking part shuts down. Child can't listen, solve problems, or follow instructions until their body settles.

3. Behaviour shows stress, not defiance

Crying, kicking, shouting, or running away are signs that the survival brain is in charge. The child isn't trying to be difficult. They're trying to cope with feelings that are too big for them.

4. A calm adult helps the child feel safe

Your steady breathing, slow voice, and warm presence send a strong message of safety. This helps the child's body stop reacting as if there's danger.

5. The child's brain and body copy yours

When you stay calm, the child's breathing slows, their heart rate steadies, and the thinking part of the brain begins to switch back on.

6. Teaching and talking come later

Children can't learn new skills when they're in survival mode. First help them feel safe and settled. When they're calm, the thinking brain is ready again, and that's the time to talk and teach coping skills.

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