Our job on the CAU is to better understand what makes your child upset and to help him or her with this. Often kids get upset when they become frustrated. Some kids have figured out ways to deal with frustration and for other kids this is harder.

We would like to help your child when he or she is beginning to get “frustrated” before it becomes a big deal and ends in a “meltdown”. “Meltdowns” are times when someone is so upset and frustrated or angry that they “can’t even see straight”. At these times, it is very difficult to figure out what to do to make things better. The feelings of being upset, frustrated and angry may make it difficult to think clearly and make decisions to solve the problem. At times such as these it is very hard to feel in control and to problem solve.

Many of the children who come to this unit have problems managing frustration and stress. When they become very upset and lose control, it creates problems for parents/caretakers in knowing how to manage the situation.

We want to get to know enough about your child so that we can help when he or she is first beginning to become frustrated.
And we want to work on a plan with you and your child to help with this.

Here are some questions that will help us find the answers we need to help you and your child:

For the following, please answer as if you were answering this for your child.

Which of the following do you think is true for your child? Put a Y for yes or an N for No.

It is very hard for me to sit still

It is very hard for me to be quiet and not talk out loud.

It is very hard for me to switch what I am doing in a hurry, especially if I am having a good time.

I can’t think straight if I am given more than 1 direction at once.

I have a hard time listening if people talk too long.

I need help trying to decide what I should do next and how to do it.

I have trouble remembering things especially when I am upset.

I have a really hard time thinking clearly when I am upset.

I have a hard time making and keeping friends.

I need people to tell me exactly what they want; I can’t figure it out by myself by looking at them.

I am not good at taking hints or body gestures and knowing what they mean.

I know that I want friends but I do not know how to play with them.

I have a hard time trying to imagine ahead of time what will happen if I do something to someone.
I have a hard time figuring out what someone means or wants just by looking at their face, or listening to their tone of voice.

I have a hard time finding the right words to say when I want to tell someone something important.

I often have a hard time figuring out what someone is saying to me.

It is very hard for me to describe my emotions in words.

I feel cranky, grumpy, irritable most of the time.

The littlest thing can make me very grumpy.

I have a hard time getting out of a grumpy mood.

I always imagine the worst.

I don’t expect good things to happen to me.

I think that I am stupid, or fat, or ugly.

I do think that people like me.

I don’t like my life.

I feel I need to look out for myself or people will hurt me.

I worry about a lot of things.

I expect bad things to happen. I wait for bad things to happen to me.

I feel scared a lot of the time.

I am afraid of people.

I want the same things to happen over and over again.

I do not like changes in my routine. I want each day to be the same.

I am sensitive to:

Temperature I don’t like it too hot or too cold.

Clothing I only like certain types of clothes and it depends on the way they feel.

Food I only like certain foods. The way food feels in my mouth is important.

Motion I like to sit, stand, jump, move a certain way.

Sound I do not like certain noises. I don’t like loud noises.

Touch I do not like people to touch me. I like it when people squeeze me a little.
Tell us what really “bugs” your child.

For example: I can’t stand it when someone interrupts me when I am speaking.

I don’t like it when people get too close to me.

When your child becomes really upset what helps him/her calm down?

Being left alone

Being given some time to go to my room

I like to throw things when I am upset

I like to yell when I am upset

I like someone to stay with me until I am a little calmer

I need to feel that grown-ups understand why I am upset

I need someone to help me understand what I did but to tell me in a soft voice.

I need to wait until I am calmer to talk about what happened

I don’t like to talk about what made me upset.

I can write down why I am upset.

It helps me to calm down if I can talk to my mother, father, grandmother, aunt, foster mom, etc.

I like to read in my room.

I like to take a bath or shower

I like to rub lotion on my skin

I like to comb my hair

I like to take pace up and down the hall

I like play with my toys (Gameboy, stuffed animals, cars)

I like to shoot hoops

I like to rollerblade
What else would help your child to calm down?

What should we watch for as a sign that your child is beginning to have a “meltdown”?

- I clench my fists
- I mutter to myself
- I curse
- I yell
- I argue with people
- I try to start a fight
- I try to throw things
- I start to sweat
- I turn red in the face
- I run as fast as I can
- I refuse to move
- I repeat what someone says
- I start to talk loud
- I talk faster
- I make faces
- I cry

What other things would tell us your child is very upset?

What things would make it worse for your child when he/she was very upset?

- Closing the door to the room I am in
- Male staff coming close to me
Female staff coming close to me
Being in the dark
Being in a room with bright lights
Being held down by staff (all staff, male staff, female staff)
Warning me about the consequences
Trying to talk to me
Not letting me make a phone call to my mom, dad, etc.
Making me sit still

**What time of the day is harder for your child?**

No time

I have a hard time getting going in the morning.

I have a hard time at night.

I have a hard time in the afternoon, before dinner.

**Are there times or places that make him/her afraid or scared?**

I am afraid to fall asleep

I am afraid to be in a room alone at night

I am afraid to be in a room with other people

I can’t fall asleep without music being on.

I need the light on to fall asleep.

I am afraid of the bathroom

I don’t like having to go into a closet.

I get scared when someone yells

I am afraid of strangers

I am afraid of certain types of people (big men, big women, etc)
What else is important for us to know about your child?

Additional information that is very important for us to know about has to do with experiences your child may have had or witnessed. Please share with us this personal information so that we can not only help your child but also insure that we do not make things any worse for him or her.

Has your child experienced any physical, sexual or emotional abuse? (If you are not sure what this would be, please ask the staff person who asked you to fill out this form.)

No

Yes, (Please explain)

Was this experiencing a one-time occurrence or did this occur repeatedly?

No

Yes, (Please explain)

Has your child or family experienced other upsetting or traumatic events? (fire, flood, witnessed a death of relative or friend, etc.)

No

Yes, (Please explain)