

# Helping My Child Stay Calm Through Thunderstorms.



Springtime and summer are notorious for daily thunderstorms. It is not uncommon for storms to cause fear and anxiety in a child— reluctance to leave the house, go outdoors, or perpetual checking of the weather. Here are some tips to help your child cope and even learn to appreciate thunder and lightning.

## Before The Storm:

Discuss with your child how they feel about storms before a storm is anywhere in sight.

- **Discuss what parts they like and dislike about storms.** Be open and listen, make sure the child feels understood rather than minimizing the fear.
- **Explain what is happening during a storm.** Understanding what causes a storm can decrease anxiety. Use simple books or videos to explain what is happening (screen ahead of time to make sure they don't fixate on the damage storms can cause).
- **Make a safety plan for the next storm.** Talk about what you can do to stay safe during a storm if you are outside, or at home, and what things you can do to provide comfort.
- **Role Play.** Replicate a thunderstorm that they have control over by making thunder with pots and pans, flashing lights for lighting, or using a white noise app. Practice your safety plan in this setting. Use some of the examples from [shandyclinic.com/understandingstorms](http://shandyclinic.com/understandingstorms) to help your child understand what causes thunder and lightning.



## During the Storm



- Stay calm, warm, and reassuring. Provide extra smiles, snuggles, and your presence.
- Talk through the safety plan and reassure them that they are safe and you are there to take care of them.
- If the sound of thunder is what makes your child nervous look at [shandyclinic.com/tooloud](http://shandyclinic.com/tooloud) for a tool kit of sensory suggestions to help your child manage loud noises.
- If your child is no longer in panic, ask what they would like to do to feel better. (Build a pillow fort, make a snack or warm drink, watch the storm together as a family, read a story).

## After the Storm

- Reassure them the storm is over, show the sun or the storm moving away on the weather radar, and positively go back to 'business as usual'.
- TV and news stations can talk about destruction from storms repeatedly. Limit exposure to media coverage to decrease unnecessary anxiety about the event.

