

Beat the Butterflies

Calm your nerves before you speak

— Before you go on: three quick resets

1

Belly breaths. Breathe in for four counts, hold for four, out for four. Do it three times. Slow breathing tells your body you are safe.

2

Power pose. Stand tall with your hands on your hips, like a superhero, for ten seconds somewhere private.

3

Shake it out. Wiggle your hands, roll your shoulders, and let the jittery energy out before you start.

— Say this to yourself

1

"I am excited." It beats "I am scared," and it is the same feeling with better fuel.

2

"I practiced this." Remind yourself that you are ready.

3

"They want me to do well." The audience is on your side.

— In your first ten seconds

1

Take one slow breath before your first word.

2

Plant your feet and stand still.

3

Start with your strong first line, the one you practiced the most.

4

Find one friendly face and talk to them.

— If your mind goes blank

- Pause and breathe. A short silence feels much longer to you than to your audience.
- Look at your notes or cards. That is exactly what they are for.
- Say your last point again in new words, then keep going.

— A sample calm-down plan

Here is what a finished plan can look like:

My move before I start: three slow belly breaths in the hallway

My power phrase: "I practiced this."

My strong first line: "Did you know octopuses have three hearts?"

My friendly face: Mr. Lee, by the door

MAKE YOUR OWN PLAN

Build your own by filling in each part.

My move before I start

My power phrase

My strong first line

My friendly face

PARENT TIP

Nerves shrink with reps, not lectures. Give your child low-stakes chances to speak, like ordering at a restaurant or telling a story at dinner, and cheer the effort, not only the result.