

The Calming Kit



The Calming Kit

HELP CHILDREN REACH THEIR POTENTIAL

Children experience big emotions and need support in managing those emotions and calming themselves. They may be angry, frustrated, irritable, exuberant, anxious, scared, sad or worried. Many times they do not have the vocabulary to talk about their emotions so they may act out in ways that are inappropriate. These episodes can be very disruptive.

Handling these difficult situations is part of supporting children. Adults can be very effective at solving such problems by modeling staying calm, listening carefully, using emotional reflections and teaching children to calm themselves. This lowers stress and helps children feel safe. When children are calm, they can successfully interact with peers, resolve conflicts and learn efficiently.

The Calming Kit ITEM / DESIRED OUTCOME




Breathing Chart

A child can calm themselves with 5 deep breaths

**Slow breathing stimulates the parasympathetic response (heart rate slows, blood pressure decreases, muscle tension decreases, and the mind calms down)*

BREATHING TO CALM DOWN

- Teach your child to breath by placing their hand on their belly and breathing in through their nose, for a count of 4 (as they feel their belly grow), blow out through their mouth emptying their chest to a count of 4 - discuss how they feel.
- Teach your children the poem: **Breathe in Breathe out** by Gigi Morales David - Located on back of **Breathing Chart**
- Recite the poem **Breathe in, Breathe out** and practice taking 5 deep breaths with the child.
- Watch  **YouTube** *Belly Breath with Elmo*
www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mZbzDOPyIA
- When you notice your child is starting to get upset, hand them the **Breathing Chart** and ask them to place a breathing icon on each square for each breath they take up to 5 deep breaths.
- After your child is finished, praise them for using this strategy to calm down. Ask the child if it helped. If not, suggest that the child choose another strategy from *The Calming Kit*.

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The Calming Kit ITEM / DESIRED OUTCOME

Feelings Wheel

Recognize and identify emotions and learn key emotional vocabulary. The Feelings Wheel helps children identify their feelings and engages the thinking part of their brain, which can then lead to self regulation.

LEARN ABOUT FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

Use the **Feelings Wheel** for games and activities to teach feelings vocabulary, help the child identify emotions and discuss how to handle these emotions. Discuss appropriate and inappropriate ways to express feelings.

- Talk to your children about the feelings and emotions that are on the **Feelings Wheel**. What are they called? How do they make you feel? What do they look like?
- Spin the wheel, then make the face it lands on and act out that feeling, have your child spin to another feeling and act it out, continue to spin the wheel and play.
- Play the feelings Bingo. Spin and match feelings on your game board until you have 4 in a row up/down, across or diagonally and then call out Bingo to win.

When your child begins to get upset, bring out the **Feelings Wheel** and ask them to use it to point to how they are feeling. Allow them to discuss feelings as long as needed. Then, guide the child to a quiet place and let them choose an activity to regulate their emotions.

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The Calming Kit ITEM / DESIRED OUTCOME

Calming Strategy Cards

Children choose and implement strategies that help them self-regulate and calm themselves. The Calming Strategy Cards provide visual choices for activities giving a child multiple options to calm down.

SELF REGULATION STRATEGIES

- Introduce and practice using the **Calming Strategy Cards** everyday. Talk about how it feels when you have feelings and emotions and what kinds of things you can do to calm yourself.
- Use the **Calming Strategy Card Tips** on following pages
- If a child is getting upset, hand them a few of the **Calming Strategy Cards**. Let your child choose a strategy. If one doesn't work, ask the child to choose another. It's good to have your child try a few strategies.
- Keep the **Calming Strategy Cards** handy for easy access.

CALMING STRATEGY CARD TIPS

Happy Thoughts

- Have a child think about their favorite animal, friend, ice cream flavor, etc... Where is their happiest place to go and what do they like to do there?

Stretch

- Overhead Arm Stretch - works the upper body, shoulders, and arms. Stand up straight with feet shoulders width apart, raise both arms straight up over head, do not lock elbows, clasp hands together, and turn to the left and to the right, bend slightly backwards with neck and chin lifted, stand straight and lower arms. Check out a variety of other stretching exercises on trusted websites.

Yoga

There are several online sites. Please visit them to learn how to do these key poses for children:

- Mountain Pose
- Butterfly Pose
- Cat Pose
- Warrior Pose
- Downward Facing Dog Pose
- Cobra Pose
- Tree Pose
- Childs Pose



Relax

- Find a comfy place to sit, Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths.
- Open your eyes and move your jaw back and forth, stretch your neck and move head side to side.

Blow Bubbles

- Blow out the tension, worry, anxiety, by blowing bubbles. Take turns, watch the bubbles pop with laughter, freeing the child of tension, worry, anxiety, etc...

Count

- Have non-chokable items available for children to count - blocks, spoons, stuffed animals, etc... If the items are able to fit into a container have them remove from one container and place into another as they count. When completed have them say out loud "I did it" or "success" with a big smile.

Drink

- A sip of water can do wonders to calm down. Cold on a hot day or warm on a cold day. Have the child describe how it feels. Cold and refreshing or warm and soothing, etc...