

Calming Activities

When a child is in a true calm state they feel emotionally safe, they are better able to engage in interactions with others around them, and they are ready to learn and engage in their environment. This handout covers some ways to help children achieve a calm state.

Games and activities

- Teach children deep breathing techniques
 - Provide each child with a small scarf or tissue paper and get them to hold it in front of their face and then blow on it in attempt to move it away from their face.
 - Teach through having the children smell a flower and blow a pinwheel (visuals or real objects can be used)
 - Blow bubbles (ensure that the setting allows for bubbles as they can make things slippery)
- Have the children blow cotton balls across the table or blow them as they lay on their tummies on the floor
- Provide opportunities for yoga moves and meditation.
- Watch glitter Jars placed in a safe container and sealed appropriately (children can help make them)
- Provide the opportunity for rocking (e.g. through rocking chair or rocking horse) or swinging. Back and forth movements can be calming. Avoid spinning activities as those can be alerting.
- Provide children with heavy work opportunities – Please review heavy work handout for details. Providing children with heavy work opportunities can help your body reach a “just right” level of alertness if you are overexcited or too sleepy.
- Create opportunities for quiet activities such as coloring, reading books, and puzzles.
- Sing quiet songs with the children
- Allow the child/children to sit in a beanbag chair or how-da-hug chair.

Environmental Considerations

- Allow children to have access to their blanket or comfort toy from home
- Play quiet classical music at certain times in the day (e.g. during snack or prior to nap time)
- Add a Quiet Cube/ quiet corner in your classroom: you can have gentle night light, quiet music, pillows, blankets and some books inside
- Explore re-structuring your classroom in a way that naturally creates a quieter side, by bringing together the quiet play materials, and a more active side, by placing all the active play materials closer in proximity (e.g. blocks, water table, etc...); this will allow the children to move to the side of the room that suits them best.
- Dim the lights at times where the noise level gets too high. Explore placing a safe material over the light to make them dimmer, or turn on half of the lights and leave the other half off.
- Use soft yellow light vs. Fluorescent lights when trying to create a calming environment. (ensure that the light set-up is safe)
- When you are talking to the children watch for your voice level and tone of voice, a quieter sound with a softer tone is more calming than a louder sound with higher tone.
- Install child-safe lava lamp in your classroom

Considerations for Children at the Individualized Level of the Pyramid:

- Explore the use of noise cancelling headphones to allow the child to have control over the noise level in their environment. (consult with an Occupational Therapist prior to use)
- Allow the child to get access to a quieter room/area to through regular breaks (e.g. sit in the hallway to read a book by the fish tank area). These can be most helpful prior to or right after loud/active times (e.g. free play time, outdoor play)

Note: Consult with occupational therapist if the above ideas are not helping as there might be underlying causes that need to be addressed from a different angle.