

Calm Down Box

Why?:

Some children can find it difficult to calm down from experiencing intense emotions such as anger or upset. Many children naturally learn to sooth themselves and recover from these emotions, some children need some extra support to do this. As adults we may use calming and relaxing strategies such as breathing and tensing and relaxing routines, which can be quite abstract to children but equally useful. The items listed can support children to calm down by helping them to engage in calming and relaxing activities that are visual and or hands on in nature.

How?:

They can be presented in a box/ bag with several of the items included. If it is in a box/ bag it is easily transport to different areas of the environment to support calming. Some setting may have a space that is more supportive to calm down e.g. cosy corner but ensure this does not become a time out alternative, calming down must not be seen as a negative consequence or reward.

The calm down box can be calmly introduced and supported to use when a child looks like they may be getting stressed, or subsequent to an incident you will need to wait for the initial response to abate before introducing. Support the child to choose an item (or you choose) and support to engage, you can use one or lots until calm, if they get more distressed with strategy back off for a bit.

Breathing activities to relax (to support gentle and deep breath blowing)

- Pinwheels
- Feathers to blow (add straws to direct blowing if appropriate)
- Bubbles
- Pom-poms to blow
- Light chiffon scarves/ juggling scarves



Something to squeeze to release tension

- Play dough
- Silly putty
- Stress ball
- Squidgy ball with gel inside



Something to visually calm and distract (if heavy items consider safety)

- Gel timers
- Sand timers
- Bottles filled with baby oil and glitter to shake and watch pattern



Emotions (for child to freely look at or when calming)

- Mirror
- Emotions symbols
- Photos of people exhibiting emotions



Something to calm and relax (or available, but not in box)

- Soft toy
- Cushion
- Blanket or seed bag that can be heated (don't heat but can be comforting)

