

Calm Down Bottles



They provide healthy and effective ways for little ones to help **soothe themselves, calm down**, take deep breaths, and work through **their emotions**.

What you will need:

- Empty 500ml water bottle with a screw top lid
- Glitter glue
- Warm water
- Glitter



Stress balls



A child's sensory system is so powerful. They learn, feel and cope through touch. Children can use it to 'squeeze out their worries' or 'squeeze out their anger or frustration'. Stress balls can have different textures; bumpy and loose, tough or soft.

What you will need:

- Balloons
- A spoon
- A funnel
- Filling of your; flour, cornflour, dry rice or dry lentils

How to make it:

1. Fill your **bottle** just over $\frac{1}{2}$ full with **warm water**, then add your **glitter glue** and screw on the lid
2. Shake your **bottle** to mix the **glitter glue** and **warm water** together
3. Open the **bottle** again and add more **water** until it is $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Add in the **glitter**, you will be able to judge how much you need.
4. Add a little more **water** so it is nearly full but leaves enough room for the water to move. Put on the lid and shake to mix.

How to make it:

1. Blow up the **balloon** slightly to open it up
2. Put the **funnel** into the top of your balloon and fill full with your choice of **filling**.
3. Tightly tie the top of the **balloon** and cut off above the knot
4. Open up another **balloon** and fit your filled one inside and then tie tightly and cut above the knot

Windmills



This is a creative and fun way to encourage and teach your child deep breathing. Deep breathing helps us to stay calm, reduce our heart rate and reduce any rapid breathing.

What you will need:

- Wooden stick or straw
- Scissors - Ruler
- 2 different coloured pieces of squared paper (6inches)
- Glue (pritt stick)
- A pushpin - Pencil



How to make it:

1. Using the glue, stick the 2 different coloured pieces of paper together
2. Take a ruler and draw a light line diagonally across the square of paper in both directions
3. On each line, measure 2 and $\frac{3}{4}$ inches from each corner and mark with a dot. Cut up to the dots and rub out the remaining lines
4. Using your pencil make a hole in every other corner tip and fold these into the middle
5. Using the push pin join these altogether and fit the pin through the back of the windmill.
6. Finally glue your stick/straw to the back.

Worry Turtles

A child's sensory system is so powerful. They learn, feel and cope through touch. Children can use their turtle to touch, stroke and fiddle with; feeling something soft or fluffy can be calming. They can also tell their worries to the turtle if they have the words.



What you will need:

- Felt (green or brown/black)
- Large green pompom
- Small green pompom
- Googly eyes
- Glue gun



How to make it:

1. Cut out piece of felt for the feet at the bottom of the turtle
2. Stick the large green pompom onto the felt base with a glue gun (or glue that will stick fabric)
3. Again using the glue stick the small green pompom onto the large one for a head
4. Finally use the glue to stick on two googly eyes

Smelly Socks

Smells can do amazing things for our mind and body. From stress relief to headache relief, certain aromas have a way of making a positive impact. From lavender to cinnamon, citrus, and chocolate, so why not try them with your little one.



What you will need:

- Clean baby socks (can be new or old odd socks)
- Elastic bands
- Soap or essential oils
- Cotton wool

How to make it:

1. Cut the soap into small pieces so it will fit inside the sock with some cotton wool
2. Place in the sock and tie tightly with an elastic band and then turn the sock inside out to cover the opening and create a ball shape
3. If you are using essential oils, put a few drops into a cotton wool ball and follow step 2.

Other things to put in the calm down box



Playdough



Bubbles



Tissue Paper



Pipe cleaners



Noise cancelling
headphones



Bubble wrap



Party blowers



Mini torch



Favourite book



five to thrive

The things you do every day that help your child's growing brain

How can we link these calm down tips and tools to the five building blocks of Five to Thrive to help build your child's brain?

Background information on the importance of staying calm and relaxing: A young child's mind is so active they still find things confusing and can't manage stress themselves. **The stress hormone Cortisol has a negative effect on our bodies; so we want to teach children how to relax, stay calm and calm down.** Children find it hard to **self-regulate** (*calm down by themselves*) so they need you to co-regulate them (*help them to calm down*) and then teach them how to **self-regulate**.

Co-regulation: This is when you help your child to **calm down**; a child who is repeatedly **calmed and comforted** when they are scared or anxious learns to calm themselves and in turn **self-regulate**. *When you relax your heartbeat slows down – and so does your child's, your breathing slows down – and so does your child's, your blood pressure drops – and so does your child's, finally your muscles relax – and so does your child's.*

Self-regulation: Self-regulation is when you can **calm down** yourself or have the tools to help you **calm down**. This booklet and session aims to show you how to make and use tools to help your child eventually be able to **self-regulate**. These can all be linked to the **Five to Thrive building blocks** of things you can do every day to help your child's growing brain.

Talk: talk to your child when you are showing them these tools or tips; talk them through how or when they can use them. Speak to your child in a calm and relaxed way and make eye contact (if your child is able to). Try out some emotion coaching "I can see that you are upset". Use the emotion visuals to talk about emotion words and help them to label how they are feeling' happy, sad, proud, angry, worried, scared, excited, etc

Play: We know that play is how children learn best and making things fun will motivate them. We also know that children's brains work at a slower pace than ours and they need to do things again and again to build those learning connections. So when using these tools or tips play with your child and have FUN! Pick a time when your child is calm to play and practice with them!

Relax: When you are using these tips and tools, making them with your child (*depending on age*) or showing and teaching them how to relax try to be relaxed yourself; remember what we said about co-regulation; if you are relaxed they will be relaxed too.

Cuddle: Touch can be an important part of relaxation, imagine yourself when you get a massage for example. Cuddling your child can help them to relax or sitting down and getting cosy next to them. Having their hair brushed or a hand on their shoulder; try to think about what your child likes and encourage them to ask for this if they need help to relax or calm down. Knowing they need a hug and being able to ask for one can be part of self-regulation as they develop this skill.

Respond: This can be many things; listening, tone of voice, noticing things, acting to what your child needs, praise, encouragement and both verbal or non-verbal communication. It is important to try and be as empathetic as possible and put yourself in your child's position, especially when it comes to trying to help them to relax or stay calm. When you are responding you are modelling to your child and they will copy you, so if you are calm; consistent and predictable when you respond to them they will copy you.