

Self Regulation

53 Calming Activities for Little Ones



MOUTH / ORAL ACTIVITIES:

1. Breathing exercises (see separate hand out)
2. Cold water in a bottle with a long, curly straw
3. Gum (or a icy pole) can be a powerful brain calmer
4. Nibble on frozen fruit
5. Fruit smoothie through a straw (suck is calming)
6. Blow bubbles with a bubble wand (mimics deep breathing)
7. Put a few drops of soap in a bowl and blow bubbles through a straw, or herd “sheep” (cotton balls) with a straw
8. Blow on a party blower (the vibration is calming)
9. Pretend your finger is a candle and practice blowing it out
10. Blow up a balloon



SKIN / TOUCH ACTIVITIES:

11. Offer a hug or show them how to self hug
12. “Squish sandwich” - put pillows or couch cushions under and on top of your child as they lay face down on the floor and apply pressure. (the weight is comforting)
13. Try a weighted blanket
14. Roll child up in a blanket, then pull gently to unroll
15. Rub lotion on each others’ hands/skin (or use coconut oil if child dislikes lotions)
16. Make a “calming basket” with fidgets, squishy toys, or calming stuffed animals
17. Play with the family pet or take a cat/dog cuddle break
18. Playdough
19. Finger painting

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MOVEMENT-BASED ACTIVITIES:

20. Find a 'sit spot' somewhere that is quite and safe
21. Smell the flowers
22. Tense and release
23. Smiling contest
24. Heel drops (up on toes, drop to flat feet and repeat)
25. Do push-ups and relays together by doing a bear walk (on hands and feet, face down), or crab walk (on hands and feet, belly up)
26. Jump on a trampoline
27. Ride a bike or scooter
28. Shoot some hoops/play catch/nerf frisbee
29. Play balloon "volleyball"
30. Swing on a swing set
31. Dance it out
32. Go outside and look at the clouds, see if you can make shapes out of the clouds
33. Turn on some music
34. Run up and down the stairs (how fast can kids find the object you hid downstairs?)
35. Make an obstacle course
36. Bounce on an inflatable exercise ball
37. Shake it out
38. Make a big pile of pillows and have kids jump onto them from a step stool or couch
39. Go for a walk, get some Vitamin D and some fresh air
40. Try some yoga poses

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VISUAL ACTIVITIES:

41. Simon says, let the child be Simon!
42. Color independently or together, this may help less verbal kids identify feelings and wants in their picture.
43. Art, art, and more art!
44. Look at books with beautiful pictures/illustrations, make up stories that could fit the pictures.
45. Build a fort as a safe space that also limits visual stimuli
46. Bubbler toy or a lava lamp in a dark room



AUDITORY ACTIVITIES:

47. Create a drum rhythm, create a tapping/drumming sequence that the other person has to copy
48. Listen to favorite music (use earbuds or headphones if it helps)
49. Sit outside to listen to the birds and the breeze
50. Hum or sing
51. Use a couple of kazoo's (for both humor and vibration to the inner ear)
52. Use a white noise machine (on a calming sound) while looking at books
53. Musical instrument box - kids feel in control of their auditory environment when they make music