



Calming Activities

Children and young people can reach a high state of arousal for a multitude of reasons. It is important that we support them with appropriate and individualised sensory input to increase their sensory modulation opportunities. This sheet includes a number of suggestions for calming strategies - it is important to select the activities that work most effectively for each individual.

Routine	Music	Basic need check	Lighting
Dark tent / den	Calming exercises	Rocking / Swaying	Deep Pressure
Breathing Techniques	Sensory Walk	Calm Box	Massage
Sensory Play	Yoga / Meditation	Listening to a story	



Routine - It may be worth making reference to the plan/schedule (verbally / visually) to help individuals feel calmer.



Calming exercises - Some particular exercises can help to calm and regulate senses e.g. wall and chair presses, plank, overhead stretches.



Calm Box - Can have items that the child finds calming such as liquid timers, stress balls, tiddle toys, sensory bottles, ear-defenders.



Music - Listening to some calm music can help to regulate the senses. Explore different types of music and look for calm responses from your child.



Rocking and swaying - rhythmic movement can help a child feel secure. It can be achieved through putting the child on your lap and gently rocking, a rocking chair, sensory swings, material swaddles.



Massage - Gentle massage provides a balanced and healthy sense of touch and helps to relax the body and the mind.



Basic Needs - This is a simple one, but can be overlooked so easily! Does the child need a drink, food, the toilet or are they in pain?



Deep pressure - This can help reduce arousal levels and support sensory modulation. This can be applied through gentle squeezing, hugs, weighted blanket, theaptic brushing (OT input needed)



Sensory Play - Sensory trays can offer tactile sensory input. Beans and rice can be effective and also adding lavender to the rice could help.



Lighting - Use dim lighting options e.g. lamps, torches, light toys or even turn lighting off. Light projectors can be very effective too.



Breathing Techniques - These can be done through the Breathing Triangle, Take 5 breathing exercise, teddy on tummy, blowing windmills



Yoga / Meditation -
www.cosmickids.com
www.headspace.com
<http://family.gonoodle.com/channels/flow>



Dens - Some children find it relaxing to be in enclosed spaces, e.g. dark dens, homemade den.



Sensory Walk A walk can provide a mental and physical break allowing the child to self-regulate.



Story - Sharing a book can be very calming. It might be that the child prefers the same book as this can provide predictability and comfort.

Bedtime Routine
A consistent, predictable set of activities will help to prepare your child mentally and physically for sleep.

Bedtime Associations
These provide clear and reassuring signals that it is time for bed e.g. white noise, lavender spray on pillow, a safe item of clothing belonging to attachment figure.

Bedtime Melatonin Rich Foods
Some children may benefit from melatonin rich foods, as they contain sleep regulating hormones and chemicals e.g. milk, bananas, oats



Calming children and young people pre-bedtime.

Here are some bedtime specific calming suggestions.