

ADVICE SHEET

Brain Calmers for the Early Years

Adapted from Beacon House Resources

We know that young children need a web of strong, secure relationships around them. This will aid further development of relationships, positive wellbeing and help the child to be ready to learn. To further support children who have become overwhelmed and have suffered trauma and loss, as Early years practitioners we can also provide patterned, respective, rhythmic activities.

Brain calming activities need to be:

- Offered by the special (safe) adult - Keyperson
- Need to be developmentally appropriate
- Repetitive (patterned)
- Pleasurable
- Rhythmic
- Respectful of the child and their family

“The best way to use these activities is to weave them into the child’s daily routine so that they have them little and often every day’ (Beacon House).

Many of these can be offered as a group activity and become part of the setting’s routines.

Walking

- Asked to do regular jobs so there are walking breaks between activities
- Showing new children where resources / places are within the setting
- Being given information while walking
- A walk where they are on the lookout for particular items (cars, animals etc.)

Dancing

- ‘Wake Up and Shake Up’, ‘Sticky Kids’ ‘ Write Dance for Nurseries’ at points in the day
- A focused energy boosting activity during ‘welcome’ or adult led activities
- Songs with actions
- Music sessions

Running

- During gross motor skills activities
- A focused energy boost activity (see above)
- Changing your routine for some children so they can 'run' before they sit on the carpet

Drumming

- As part of music sessions
- Area outside that provides opportunities
- Body rhythm activities
- Action songs

Tapping

- Self-tapping on knees while thinking of good positive things
- Self-tapping while doing breathing
- Self-tapping while engaged in something fun

Singing

- Singing songs 1-1 with key person
- Having CD's of songs from children's home backgrounds / languages
- Action songs

Breathing

- Keyperson / child mirroring breathing
- Blowing activities (bubbles, straw football, actions during stories)
- After food breaks, closing eyes and taking breaths while thinking of meditation pictures)

Movement

- Introducing a rocking chair they can choose to use
- Action songs and rhymes
- Simple stretching activities
- Stretching at the end of the day

Music

- Individual headphones for children to listen as they wish
- Calming music on entry
- Write Dance for Nurseries



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