

Calming Box

Why?

Some children can find it difficult to calm down after experiencing intense emotions such as anger or upset. Many children naturally learn to soothe 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 by helping them to engage in calming and relaxing activities that are visual and or hands-on in nature.

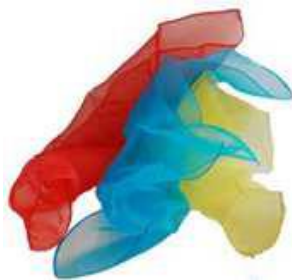
How?

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

The calming box can be introduced when a child looks like they may be getting stressed, or after an incident, you will need to wait for the initial response to reduce before introducing it. Support the child to choose an item (or you choose) and support to engage, you can use one or several until the child appears to relax. If they become further distressed move away and allow the child to use the items alone.

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

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



Something to squeeze to release tension

- Playdough
- Silly putty
- Stress ball
- Squidgy ball with gel inside



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

- Gel timers
- Bottles filled with baby oil and glitter to shake and watch pattern/Lava lamp



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

- Soft toy
- Cushion
- Blanket or seed bag that can be heated (do not heat but can be comforting)

