

50 calming activities using each of the senses

Many of the activities on this list involve motion. A favorite phrase to use that kids can remember is: Motion changes emotion. Feeling sluggish? Get your body moving! Feeling anxious and fidgety? Try some slow deep pressure. How your child uses motion to change emotion can help them learn to self-regulate in a healthy way.

MOUTH / ORAL ACTIVITIES:

1. Deep breathing aka: dragon breaths
2. Cold water in a bottle with a long curly straw
3. Gum (or a popsicle) can be a powerful brain calmer
4. Offer frozen or dried mango slices
5. Fruit smoothie through a straw (suck is calming)
6. Blow on a pinwheel or 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 or kazoo (the vibration is calming)
9. Pretend your finger is a candle and practice blowing it out
10. For older kids - "Let's grab some chips and salsa, and we'll talk this through."

SKIN / TOUCH ACTIVITIES:

(Many of these activities are included in our [sensory input techniques video](#) found on YouTube.)

11. Offer a 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. You can even start to talk about whatever is troubling them while they are in this position.
13. Try a weighted blanket
14. Some kids love it when you lay on top of them (of course be careful to regulate your pressure).
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, and let your child choose things from it. Try searching the internet for "weighted/warmable stuffed animals" meant specifically for self-regulation.
17. Play with the family pet or take a cat/dog cuddle break
18. Back scratches or back rubs before bed
19. Paint each other's nails
20. Finger painting
21. Braiding or playing with each other's hair
22. Play dough
23. A tub or shower
24. Roll child up in a blanket, then pull gently to unroll

MOVEMENT BASED (VESTIBULAR / PROPRIOCEPTIVE) ACTIVITIES

25. Do push-ups, 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 around the block
28. Shoot some hoops/play catch/nerf frisbee
29. Play balloon "volleyball"
30. Swing on a swing set
31. Work out on a treadmill/elliptical, etc, if you have one, and talk about how you feel better. Then invite your child to try it. (Please follow safety guidelines if your child is on a piece of your fitness equipment.)
32. Go to the park and do some climbing
33. Turn on kids' favorite music and have a dance party
34. Run up and down the stairs (how fast can kids find the object you hid downstairs?)
35. Make an obstacle course including a collapsible tunnel
36. Bounce on an inflatable exercise ball (or kids hop ball)
37. Bungee "pogo" jumper
38. Make a big pile of pillows and have kids jump onto them from a step stool or couch

VISUAL ACTIVITIES

39. Calm down jar
40. Color independently or together with your child. This may help less verbal kids identify feelings and wants in their picture.
41. Art, art, and more art
42. Look at books with beautiful pictures/illustrations. You could even buy a book of scenic photography (or look at online photos) and make up stories that could fit the pictures.
43. Build a fort as a safe space that also limits visual stimuli
44. Bubbler toy, or a lava lamp in a dark room

AUDITORY ACTIVITIES

45. Listen to favorite music (use earbuds or headphones if it helps)
46. Sit outside to listen to the birds and the breeze
47. Hum or sing
48. Use a couple of kazoos (for both humor and vibration to the inner ear) and pretend to "talk out your conflict" through the kazoo with lots of expressions and gestures.
49. Use a white noise machine (on a calming sound) while looking at books
50. Musical instrument box - kids feel in control of their auditory environment when they make music

Read the entire article [Empowering Your Child to Calm](https://connectedfamilies.org/equipping-kids-calm-self-regulation) to learn more:

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