



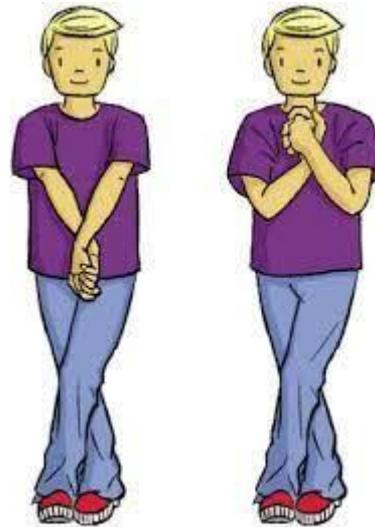
Calming Anxiety in Children

Quick Ways to Calm Down

Sometimes you'll need a quick way to help your child calm down and you don't have much with you. Maybe it's when you're out at the shops or stuck in traffic. These tips will come in handy at those times:

- Imagine your favourite place - it's like taking a mini vacation wherever you are
- Think of your favourite things
- Name animals alphabetically (alligator, bear, cow, dog, etc...)
- Squeeze Something (play dough, clay, silly putty, your fists, a stress ball)
- Get a Cold Drink of Water
- 54321 Grounding (refer to 54321 Grounding activity sheet)
- Give yourself a hug - squeeze tight!
- Remember the words to a song you love
- Do a hook up

1. Put your arms straight out in front of you, palms facing out.
2. Put one hand over the other at the wrists and interlace your fingers.
3. Swoop your hands and arms toward your body and then place your interlaced hands on your chest.
4. Cross your feet at the ankles and put your tongue on the roof of your mouth.
5. Stay still for one minute.



Deep Breathing

People usually roll their eyes initially when they hear "breathing is important". It's so simple, yet has such a big impact on your body's physiology. When you are calm and relaxed, your body is in "rest and digest" mode. You breathe normally, your heart rate is lower and your muscles are relaxed. However, when stress or anxiety or anger occurs, your body automatically switches into "flight, fight or freeze" mode. Your muscles tense up, your heart rate increases and your breathing becomes more shallow.



Taking deep breaths, instead of shallow breaths, is one way to tell your body to get back to resting and digesting. That's why deep breathing is important! Refer to the **Breathing Exercises for Children** sheet for fun ways to teach children breathing techniques..

Create a Calm Down Area

You can create a place specially designed to allow your child to calm down in a few steps.

- Find a area and make it cosy (ask your child for help with that – maybe they can place a favourite blanket or stuffed animal inside).
- Add calming tools.
- Explain how to use it and practice before.
- When they are starting to escalate, catch it early and give them a calm reminder about their calm down area.

Use Understanding and Supportive Language

Use the following phrases as a way to support your child, let them know that you're going to support them and help them in any way that you can.

"I'm here for you"

"Talk to me and tell me what's going on"

"How can I help?"

"Together, we can work on this. We're a great team"

"I love you"

"Do you want a hug?"

Make a Mind Jar

What you need:

- Empty Jar
- Water
- Glitter

You can add other items, some you could consider are:

- Lego
- Sequence
- Small stones
- Small shells
- Glow in the dark stars





Sometimes you want the glitter/other items to stay afloat longer or for a shorter amount of time. Here are some different ingredients you can use as the wet ingredients.

- Hair Gel
- Glue
- Glitter Glue
- Glow in the dark paint

How to make it:

- Put the glitter into the jar until it just covers the bottom of it.
- Add water.
- Put the cover on and shake to help the ingredients combine.
- Once you are satisfied with the look of your jar, then you can super glue the lid shut so it doesn't spill.

Make a Coping Skills Toolbox

A Coping Skills Toolbox is a kit that you create to help your child calm down when they are upset, anxious or worried. In order to get the most benefit from this, you should create this kit before an issue occurs. When your child experiences anxiety, then they can pick out an item from their Coping Skills Toolbox. Use some of the **Zones of Regulation support sheets** to help with this and the **Coping Skills Checklist** for further ideas.