

Calming strategies

Child's name: _____ Date: _____



These activities can help any child who is anxious, but are particularly useful for children who are sensory defensive. They help to relax the nervous system and can reduce exaggerated responses to sensory input.

- During carpet time, allow child to lie on tummy, or sit against a body pillow whilst listening to a story etc.
- Place hands on child's shoulders and apply deep pressure through them.
- Encourage self-imposed hugs or hugging a pillow tightly when anxious / upset or prior to an uncomfortable event.
- Body pressure — teach the child to sit on the floor with knees bent up to chest, arms around knees and then squeeze themselves very tightly. The same thing can be done sitting on a chair.
- **Time out** space, ideally enclosed quiet space (large box / pop-up tent) with beanbag chair inside is good escape from too much stimulation — child may enjoy lying over or under beanbag more than sitting on it.
- Weighted lap snake — on lap or wrapping around shoulders too (see *Equipment list*).
- Slow rocking or swaying (rhythmic motion), i.e. have a rocking chair available in the classroom.
- Listen to soft or rhythmic music. Mozart and Vivaldi are thought to be calming and conducive to learning.
- Reduce noise and light levels.
- Provide hand squeeze, e.g., ball.
- Counting down — teach child to count themselves down from 10 to 1 before moving onto the next activity. The counting should be done fairly slowly and with eyes closed.

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