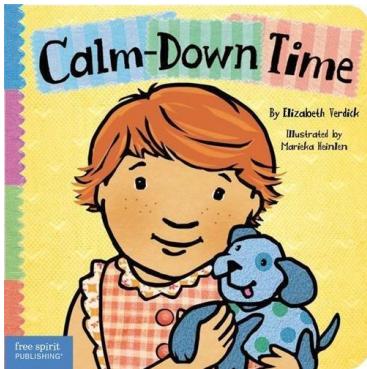




SEEDS for Story Time

Promoting Social Emotional Development Through Books



Calm Down Time

By Elizabeth Verdick

Through rhythmic text and warm illustrations, this gentle, reassuring book offers toddlers simple tools to release strong feelings, express them, and calm themselves down. Children learn to use their calm-down place—a quiet space where they can cry, ask for a hug, sing to themselves, be rocked in a grown-up’s arms, talk about feelings, and breathe: “One, two, three . . . I’m calm as can be. I’m taking care of me.” After a break, toddlers will feel like new—and adults will, too. (Ages 1-3)

Introducing this book to young children:



SED2.1b

As you’re reading the story, pause to practice taking deep breaths. Breathing exercising help children learn to self-regulate, but learning to breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth can be tricky. Take a deep breath by pretending to smell a flower, count to three and pretend to blow out a candle. Print the visuals [here](#).



SED3.2b

After reading the book several times so children have the opportunity to become familiar with the story, encourage them to perform the actions as you read the book. For example, if you read that “I can put my arms around myself to give my body a squeeze”, have the children wrap their arms around their shoulders and give a squeeze.



SED2.1b

Talk about how we can calm ourselves when upset. Show the pictures from the book and model what each child is doing. For example, model for children how to ask for support from an adult like they did in the book “hug me, please” or “hold me, please”. Tell children that we all may have different ways that we like to calm down when we are upset and that’s okay.



SED3.1b

Introduce children to a stuffed animal in the classroom and explain that it will be added to the cozy corner. Use self-talk to help children deal with strong feelings. For example, say “I am so upset. I am going to hug teddy to feel better.”

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Repeated readings of the same book provides opportunities for toddlers to develop a sense of competence and confidence. Children learn to point at and label pictures, turn pages, discuss the story, and make predictions of what will happen next, while learning new words and relating the story to their own experiences. Read *Calm Down Time* for several days in a row and use some of the ideas, activities, and teaching opportunities listed below to enhance social and emotional skills.



GELDS Activity Spotlight

Art

Play dough can be a wonderful calming activity. Mix instant mash potatoes and cold water together to make play dough that is safe for infants and toddlers. Divide the dough into different containers and make different colors using food coloring. As children explore the play dough, talk with children about their feelings **CR2.2a**

Sensory

Create a variety of calming sensory tubs to add to your sensory area. Using plastic shoe box sized tubs, fill the tubs with a variety of items. For example, cotton balls, fabric scraps, cut-up dish sponges or other tactile materials. Add tongs, scoops, and small toys to each tub. Encourage toddlers to play independently with these materials when they need a break or at any time throughout the day. **APL2.3a**

Cozy Area

Create a cozy area in your classroom where children can choose to visit to calm down or take a break. This area will be a great place for the children to learn calm themselves with adult support and minimal distraction. In this area, you can add soft cushions, calming bottles, board books and stuffed animals. **SED3.2b**

Focus on Family

Create a calm-down bottle or jar to help your child learn to self-soothe. Clean a recycled water bottle thoroughly removing the labels. You'll need clear glue and glitter. Fill the bottle about $\frac{3}{4}$ with hot water and then add an entire bottle of clear glue and glitter. Use super glue to adhere the lid in place. Model for your child how to shake the bottle and watch the glitter fall to the bottom while taking deep breaths as a way to calm down when upset. **SED3.2b**



Use self-talk to help your infant or toddler understand how you cope with big feelings. They will watch you and learn through your words and actions. Demonstrate how to manage feelings. For example, say "I spilled the milk all over the floor. Now I have to clean it up" or "I am so upset. I am going to take deep breaths and count to five."

SED3.1b