



CALMING KIT CONTENTS AND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE



In this Calming Kit, developed by the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center headquartered at SUNY Cortland, you will find several items to aid children with various sensory differences such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, sensory processing disorder and other intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. We specifically chose the items in this kit based on research that has shown the benefit they can have for calming, de-escalating, communication and/or re-focusing children who need additional support. Please use this guide to learn the reason and use for each item in the kit. It is important to remember that each child's needs will vary based on their individuality and not every item in the kit may be right for them. The IRRRC encourages you to add to and individualize your calming kits whenever possible.

| What's in my kit? | Why's it in there? How can I use it? | Supporting evidence |
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|  <p>Fidget Toy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides tactile stimulation through push buttons, switches, clickers, and rotators. Tactile stimulation is often useful for sensory reduction and/or enhancing focus for people with ASD and/or ADHD • Use during programs that are highly auditory or discussion-based • Not recommended for use during hands-on activities • Closely monitor the use of the toy so it does not become a distraction or projectile | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slater, D., & French, J. (2010). Fidget toys in the classroom: Refocusing attention" (2010). <i>SoTL Commons Conference. 4</i>. http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/sotlcommons/SoTL/2010/4. |
|  <p>Kleenex Facial Tissues</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a soft object to squeeze, hold, and calm kids with tactile stimulation • Can create a sanitary environment for comfort; tissue provides a way to pick items up, blow nose, etc. • Tissue can be crumpled or torn to relieve anxiety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wester, K., & Trepal, H. (2005). Working with clients who self-injure: Providing alternatives. <i>Journal of College Counseling, 8(2)</i>, 180-189. |

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|  <p>Noise Cancelling Headphones</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noisy program areas and environments can be overstimulating to children with sensory needs Muting noise in these areas provides a sense of comfort and respite from noisy environments Using soothing/meditative MP3 audio with the headphones is another beneficial use for this item Closely monitor the use of this item so it is not abused or cause distraction from programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ikuta, N. et al. (2016). Effectiveness of earmuffs and noise-cancelling headphones for coping with hyper-reactivity to auditory stimuli in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A preliminary study. <i>Hong Kong Journal of Occupational Therapy</i>, 28, 24-32. Prieto, N. (2012). Headphones for children with autism. <i>Easter Seals Crossroads, INDATA News</i>. Retrieved from http://www.eastersealstech.com/2012/03/27/headphones-for-children-with-autism/ |
|  <p>UV Blocking Sunglasses</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct sunlight can be overstimulating to children with sensory needs These glasses provide respite from the sunlight during outdoor programs or in highly fluorescent program settings In addition, if a participant uses repetitive eye-poking or other stereotypic behaviors, eye covering can be useful to prevent this behavior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lancioni, G. et al. (2009). An overview of behavioral strategies for reducing hand-related stereotypies of persons with severe to profound intellectual and multiple disabilities: 1995–2007. <i>Research in Developmental Disabilities</i>, 30, 20–43. Cheng, M., & Boggett-Carsjens, J. (2005). Consider sensory processing disorders in the explosive child: Case report and review. <i>The Canadian Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Review</i>, 14(2), 44-48. |
|  <p>Wet Ones Travel Pack</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children with sensory disorders or OCD may rely on sanitary environments for comfort; wet wipes or sanitary napkins provide the security of knowing they'll be able to sanitize an environment quickly with a cleaning cloth Often used on doorknobs before entering/ exiting rooms or on seats that are used by other participants Can also be used to sanitize the contents of the calming kit after use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rachman, S., et al. (2011). Reducing contamination by exposure plus safety behavior. <i>Journal of Behavior Therapy & Experimental Psychiatry</i>, 42, 397-404. |

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|  <p data-bbox="138 464 415 526">Nature Calming Scenes Photo Album</p> | <ul data-bbox="470 253 1188 428" style="list-style-type: none"> • A photo album filled with pictures of relaxing scenes from nature • Can find comfort and relaxation viewing nature scenes • During times of escalation this album can be used as an activity during a time away from program | <ul data-bbox="1251 253 1986 639" style="list-style-type: none"> • Berto, R. (2005). Exposure to restorative environments helps restore attentional capacity. <i>Journal of Environmental Psychology</i>, 25, 249–259. • Taylor, A., & Kuo, F. (2011). Could exposure to everyday green spaces help treat ADHD? Evidence from children's play settings. <i>Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being</i>, 3(3), 281–303. • Grinde, B., & Patil, G. (2009). Biophilia: Does visual contact with nature impact on health and well-being? <i>International Journal of Environmental Research & Public Health</i>, 6, 2332-2343. |
|  <p data-bbox="180 935 369 997">Stretchy Smiley Face People</p> | <ul data-bbox="470 686 1209 899" style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides tactile stimulation through texture, stretchiness, and squishy sound • Can be used as a stress reliever for anxiety, or as a fidget toy when a child does better with an object in their hand • Use as secondary fidget to actual fidget toy, less function to distract and more based on texture and feeling | <ul data-bbox="1251 686 1965 818" style="list-style-type: none"> • Schaaf, R. et. al. (2014). An intervention for sensory difficulties in children with autism: A randomized trial. <i>Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders</i>, 44, 1493–1506. |
|  <p data-bbox="191 1325 359 1354">Squeeze Toys</p> | <ul data-bbox="470 1044 1188 1354" style="list-style-type: none"> • Squeeze toys are generally used to calm children who are escalating into non-positive behavior • It can serve as a reminder to take a deep breath when experiencing a stressful situation • Often successful when used during difficult tasks • Encourage the child to take a deep breath while squeezing the toy firmly • This toy is not to be thrown or bounced but held on to tightly | <ul data-bbox="1251 1044 1965 1289" style="list-style-type: none"> • Stalvey, S., & Brasell, H. (2006). Using stress balls to focus the attention of sixth grade learners. <i>Journal of At-Risk Issues</i>, 12 (2), 7-16. • Schaaf, R. et. al. (2014). An intervention for sensory difficulties in children with autism: A randomized trial. <i>Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders</i>, 44, 1493–1506. |

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|  <p>Inside Out Social Story</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social stories are an effective way to discuss behaviors and/or expectations through an interactive and/or fun learning experience • Social stories can be beneficial for many people; however, one population that greatly benefits from this type of interactive learning style are children with Autism Spectrum Disorders • Review this story (daily, if possible) so the child can truly grasp the underlying message – identification of emotions and the knowledge of how to manage them | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ali, S., & Frederickson, N. (2006). Investigating the evidence base of social stories. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i>, 22, 355-377. • Kokina, A., & Kern, L. (2010). Social story interventions for students with autism spectrum disorders: A meta-analysis. <i>Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders</i>, 40, 812-826. |
|  <p>Keychain Visuals</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keychain visuals should be worn by staff members who facilitate programs for children who are non-verbal or benefit from pictorial communication • Each card has a different want, need, task, or question on it that both the child and facilitator can use to communicate more effectively • For example, if the facilitator wants to know if the participant needs to use the restroom, they can find that card and show them; and vice versa • Modify each card set to meet individual needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N2Y. (2017). The importance of symbols. Retrieved from https://www.n2y.com/media/1191/symbols-white-paper_web-version.pdf. • Johnson-Orliss, A. (n.d.). Research and symbols. <i>Online Special Education Solutions</i>. Retrieved from https://www.n2y.com/media/1065/research-and-symbols.pdf. • American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2017). Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Retrieved from http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/AAC/. |

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|  <p>Communication Board</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to the visual keychain, this board can be used to communicate a child's needs via pictures • Generally these boards will provide a child's most basic programmatic needs; such as using the bathroom, I want to play, I don't feel well, I need a break etc. • Communication boards are often used for children who are non-verbal communicators or who benefit from additional communication like pictures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N2Y. (2017). The importance of symbols. Retrieved from https://www.n2y.com/media/1191/symbols-white-paper-web-version.pdf. • Johnson-Orliss, A. (n.d.). Research and symbols. <i>Online Special Education Solutions</i>. Retrieved from https://www.n2y.com/media/1065/research-and-symbols.pdf. • American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2017). Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Retrieved from http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/AAC/. |
|  <p>Calming Strategy Cards</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can help a child visualize and/or understand how to manage emotions • Initially, should be used when a child is calm and ready to learn • Go over the calming strategies so the child learns appropriate ways to express and/or cope with their emotions • Have the cards present when a child is experiencing heightened emotions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dunlop, G. et al. (2006). Prevention and intervention with young children's challenging behavior: Perspectives regarding current knowledge. <i>Behavioral Disorders</i>, 32 (1), 29–45. • Eyberg, S., et al. (2008). Evidence-based psychosocial treatments for children and adolescents with disruptive behavior. <i>Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology</i>, 37(1), 215–237. |
|  <p>Wrist Band</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snapping the wrist band is a calming strategy for many people experiencing sensory overload or anxiety • Wristbands can also be used to counteract negative thoughts and focus thinking on positive thoughts • Children can wear a wristband when they feel themselves becoming more anxious or overstimulated • Teach them to snap the band on their wrist as they repeat a phrase they choose (e.g., "I am not going to let anxiety control me" or "I am going to take deep breaths now") | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desautel, L. (2015). Strengthening executive function development for students with ADD. <i>Scholarship and Professional Work – Education. Paper 100</i>. http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/coe_papers/100 |