

Calming Plan

VIBRANT AND SAIN



Calming Plan

How to Create a Plan for Everyone in Your Family to Calm Down

Sometimes kids just need a good cry and to be held. But what are the other ways we can help our kids to calm down? And what about our own feelings? What can we do rather than boiling over or bottling up our feelings? If we can calm ourselves down, then we role model and teach our kids how to handle their own feelings. Do you have a hard time coming up with fun or creative ideas for calming down when your child is screaming, hitting, or being difficult? Of course. We all do. Being fun and creative is hard to do when the lower part of the brain that produces your feelings has hijacked you. Feelings can cause you to momentarily lose touch with your higher brain (your prefrontal cortex, if you want to get technical about it). Your higher brain, while slower to respond, is the home of creativity, perspective taking, planning, reasoning, and problem solving. Because it's hard to come up with calming ideas in the moment, make this plan ahead of time together. Talk about it over dinner, or better yet over dessert.

Pretty simple, huh? That's because it is. But don't let that fool you. A calming plan is very effective for creating peace and calm in your home. Your calming plan might not work overnight. There may be some patterns in your family that will take a while to undo. Patterns can be undone.

This is the first step. May it serve you well. Remember -- it's about progress, not perfection. Love,

Cecilia and Jason Hilkey

Calming Plan

1st Step

When everyone is calm, read the list on page 5 and 6. Everyone in the family picks their top 4 or 5 favorite ways to calm down. You will have different plans. This is okay. You are different people. Choose only the ideas that fit your family values and your living situation. For example, don't let your kids choose "jump on the trampoline" if you don't own a trampoline or if you are morally opposed to trampoline jumping.

2nd Step

The plan for each person gets written down on paper with a section for each person in your family. If a child can't read, draw a picture symbol that reminds them of their plan so they can "read" it without you.

3rd Step

Post the plan in a centrally located area of the house. We use the fridge. Some folks like to stick extra copies of their plan in strategic areas around the house, in a purse or man bag, or in the car. Whatever works for you.

4th Step

Some parts of your plan might require common household materials. Gather these up. Put them in a box or basket accessible to all who need it so you aren't left scrambling.



Calming Plan

5th Step

When the oatmeal hits the fan, use the plan (that even rhymes). If kids say, "I don't want to use the plan." You say, "That's okay. I'm going to read it so you know what your options are. These are the things you wanted me to remind you of when you have big feelings."

6th Step

Revise the plan as needed.

Calming Plan Ideas

- ↪ **Visual**
- ↪ **Auditory**
- ↪ **Movement**
- ↪ **Tactile**
- ↪ **Miscellaneous**
- ↪ **Olfactory**



Visual

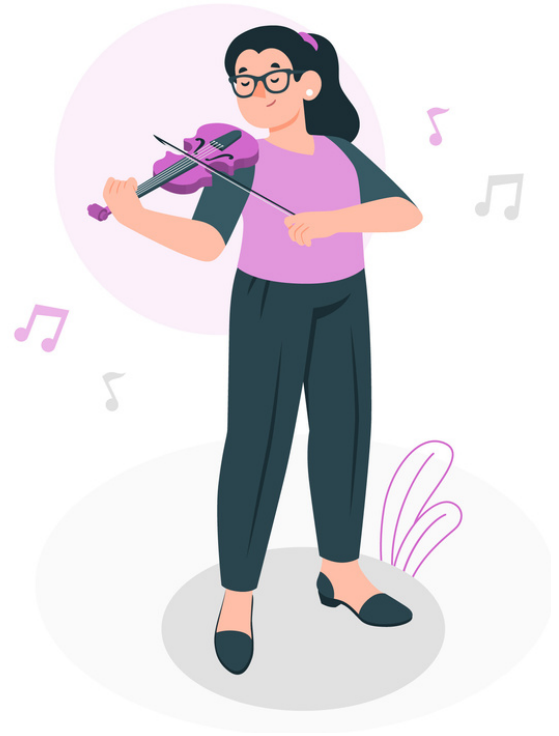
- Go outside
- Look at an aquarium
- Look out the window
- Look at a picture book or magazine
- Look at trees, grass, or plants outside
- Look at a bouquet of flowers

- Look at photos of loved ones
- Look at photos of favorite places
- Blow bubbles
- Blow up a balloon
- Watch a snow globe or a jar filled with water and glitter
- Draw a picture

Calming Plan

Auditory

- Recite a mantra
- Chant or say ohm
- Strike a gong or singing bowl
- Play a musical instrument
- Breathe deeply or sigh out loud
- Listen to music
- Sing a song



Tactile

- Soak your feet
- Snuggle together
- Pet the dog, cat, hamster, etc
- Brush your hair
- Scratch your back
- Wash your hands/face
- Take a shower/bath
- Rub a smooth stone
- Braid hair (yours or a doll's hair)
- Run fingers through dried corn or beans
- Brush or floss your teeth
- Play with clay, play dough, or slime



Calming Plan

Olfactory (smell)

- Smell flowers
- Smell essential oils
- Spray air freshener
- Light a candle



Movement

1 Jumping jacks

2 Wrestle

3 Make the bed

4 Jump on trampoline

5 Swing on a swing

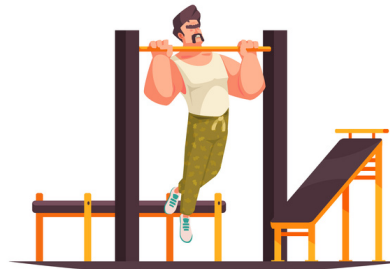
6 Push against a wall

7 Run around the block

8 Practice yoga

9 Squeeze stress ball (flour in a balloon)

10 Dance or a family dance party



Calming Plan



Stretch **11**

Slide on a slide **12**

Go for a walk **13**

skateboard **14**

Push-ups / pull-ups **15**

Sit ups or squats **16**

Ride a bike, scooter, or **17**

Hang on the monkey bars **18**

Give each other a bear hug **19**

Lift a heavy object or a weight **20**

21 Make silly faces

22 Play a drum

23 Sweep the floor

24 Wash a window

25 Wipe down a table

26 Cut the grass, pull weeds


27 Dust a shelf, Fold laundry

28 Dribble a ball, shoot baskets, play catch



Calming Plan

Miscellaneous

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- A wooden signpost with a rectangular sign attached. The sign is yellow with a white border and is held in place by two silver screws. The signpost is made of brown wood with a vertical post and a horizontal top bar. The sign is tilted slightly to the right. The background is white, and there is a patch of green grass at the bottom.
- Write in a journal
 - Drink tea or water
 - Think of something humorous
 - Do something outrageous (underwear on your head)
 - Play with a toy, doll, or stuffed animal
 - Play a game
 - Chewy on a rubber chewy
 - Do a craft
 - Meditate/Pray