



Calm-Body Toolbox

Regulation activities beyond breathing



Not every child finds breathing regulating, some children need to use their body instead.

Use this alongside your Breathing Shapes download to build a fuller toolbox.

Practise these in calm, ordinary moments (the bath, the car, before bed) so they're already familiar by the time your child needs them.

Pressure & Movement Activities

Wall pushes: hands flat against a wall, push as hard as possible for a few seconds, then release.

Palm presses: push palms together, or squeeze your hands and let go.

Stamping: stamp feet, then notice what the floor feels like underneath.

Big squeezes or a bear hug, if your child enjoys firm touch.

Wrapping tightly in a blanket, or lying on top of them (if they enjoy this).

Carrying something appropriately heavy, giving their muscles some work to do.



Follow your individual child here - a child who finds deep pressure calming and a child who hates being squeezed are both telling you something useful about what their nervous system needs.





Grounding Games

Heavy feet: push feet into the floor. “Can you feel where your shoes touch your toes? Can you feel the floor under your heels?”

“Quick, find me three things that are blue” - while out walking.

At bedtime, lie quietly and count how many different sounds you can hear.

Find something rough, something soft, or something cold.

With a young child, a full “five senses” exercise is usually too much so keep it short, playful, and developmentally appropriate. The aim is simply to bring their attention out of their head and into their body and surroundings.

Building Their Toolbox

Experiment with these activities when your child is calm, and notice which ones they naturally gravitate towards.

Over time, the language becomes familiar - “your body looks like it's getting really worried, should we do our wall pushes?”, so it's something they already know how to reach for, rather than a brand-new skill introduced in the middle of a difficult moment.

The goal is a manageable stretch. Not so small there's no challenge, not so big it's overwhelming, and it's fine for your child to still feel some worry afterwards.

You're helping their body manage the feeling, not making the feeling disappear.