

The Why Behind the Calming Breaks

Teaching children to recognize their emotions, communicate why they feel a certain way, and respond to their emotions in a positive way may be the most important thing we can teach them.

In this world we will have struggles, disappointment, frustration, sadness and sorrows. Many of us will deal with anxiety, depression, and situations that cause trauma and distress. It is outside of our control to stop negative events from happening. But it is within our control how we respond to those events and how we teach children to respond.

It is a learned skill to practice calming strategies and use them to regulate one's emotions. Kids must first learn coping and calming skills before we expect them to use them in the heat of the moment. I hope my products will aid you to teaching those skills. It takes practice when we are NOT in the heat of the moment. If a child can learn the strategies while calm, it will become a habit and routine which then will come naturally when they are upset.

PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE! I cannot say it enough! This is the key to teaching calming and coping skills!

Expect progress to take time, expect many more meltdowns and tantrums, and expect resistance to trying something new. Progress happens after months of practice and years of experience. But don't give up or give in to discouragement! Celebrate small wins of finding a calming strategy your kid likes, reducing the number of meltdowns, decreasing the overall time your child is upset, or seeing your child attempting to calm their body! Celebrate every milestone!

"Behaviorally Challenging kids are challenging because they're *lacking the skills* to not be challenging." - Dr. Ross W. Greene

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE BREAK POSTERS

POSTER #1- I FEEL...

- Ask student, *“Give me an I feel statement.”*
- Wait for response and give positive praise when student picks a statement, such as *“Great.”* Or *“Thanks for picking one.”*

POSTER #2- BECAUSE I...

- Ask student, *“Why do you feel _____? Or Why do you need a break?”*
You can use one of these statements or make up your own, but it needs to start with ‘Because I’.
This is your break, your body, and your feelings and thoughts.”
- Wait for response and give positive praise when student picks a statement beginning with *“Because I”*.
- If student does not use *“Because I”*,
restate the expectation and why it needs to start with that phrase.
- If necessary, rephrase their sentence into a statement that begins with *“Because I”*.
Such as rephrasing, “The teacher took away my recess,” into “Because I didn’t like losing my recess.”

POSTER #3- I NEED TO TAKE A BREAK.

- Ask the student, *“What would you like to do for a break?”*
- Wait for response.
If student doesn’t give a response, read the choices out loud you think they might like to do.
Give positive praise for student picking a choice.
- Have pre-printed worksheets, a sensory calming bag, loose-leaf paper, etc. . .
to offer for coping strategies that you keep with your Break Posters. I recommend keeping them all together in a binder.

I feel.....

RELAXED

Angry

offended

Frustrated

tense

Calm

MAD

Bored

confused

annoyed

STRESSED

Sad

Anxious

OVERWHELMED

sick

proud

down

Upset

Tired

ALERT

Depressed

Happy

FIDGETY

lonely

Nervous

Because I . . .

I'm worried about something.

I don't like this subject.

I can't think straight.

I didn't like what happened.

I don't understand something.

I'm having a bad day.

I'm feeling criticized.

I don't like what someone said.

I DIDN'T GET WHAT I WANTED.

I didn't sleep well last night.

I'm missing someone.

I want to do something else.

I need to
take a break.



Color



**Deep
Breathing**



I-Spy



**Matching
Game**



**Sensory
Bag**



Journal



Fidget



**Sensory
Activity**



Maze



Make a List



Sand



Walk

I need to
take a break.



Color



**Belly
Breathing**



I-Spy



**Matching
Game**



**Play
Dough**



Journal



Fidget



**Feelings
Activity**



Maze



Make a List



Sand



Mindfulness

**I need to
take a break.**

I want to be in a better mood

I want to feel calm and peaceful

I need to let go of my worries.

I need to move my body.

I need to *Calm* my body.

**I need to distract my brain
from mad/ anxious/ sad thoughts.**

I want to avoid an office referral.

I need to think more positive.

I WANT TO BE HAPPY.

I need to think about life differently.

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