

Child Development Specialist Social Emotional Activities and Ideas

Calming Activities:

- 1. Deep Breathing: Practice deep breathing three times a day as needed. STAR, Pretzel, Drain, Balloon**
- 2. Turn off all technology and have some quiet time. Focus on your breathing and tune out everything around you.**
- 3. 5 Senses Calming: Think of 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can touch, 2 things you can smell, and one thing you can taste.**
- 4. With your child, create a daily schedule or routine that incorporates school time, break time, outside time, and rest.**
- 5. Work with family members to communicate so every family member knows how to take a break. This could include a safe space away from others, a short walk, a bath or shower, getting a drink of water.**

Connecting Activities:

- 1. Draw a picture or write a letter to someone in your family telling what you appreciate about them.**
- 2. Play games – either board games or games such as Hide and Seek, I Spy, scavenger hunts or obstacle courses.**
- 3. Play Emotional Charades – Act out an emotion and see if you family can guess the emotion.**
- 4. Create positive messages – Put hearts or signs in windows, go outside and do chalk drawings, put bears in your window or go on a bear hunt.**
- 5. Do Theme Days – Pajama Day, School Spirit Days, Color Days, Sports Day.**
- 6. Sit down as a family and share a favorite memory.**
- 7. Make a Family Image Board. Fill it in with pictures of what makes you happy.**

Learning Activities

- 1. Identify and describe feeling vocabulary - Calm, Happy, Sad, Disappointed, Angry, Frustrated, Scared, Anxious, Sleepy, Bored** What it looks like, what it feels like, and remind each other there are no bad feelings. All feelings should be validated. Look at pictures in books or magazines that show how characters are feeling and why. Reinforce positive ways to express feelings.
- 2. I Messages:** An I message is a way to be assertive and let someone know how you feel. I feel (say your feeling) when you (describe the action) because (say why the action hurts you, and what you would like to happen next time). I feel sad when you won't play with me because I feel left out. Please include me.
- 3. Empathy:** Empathy is the ability to understand the feelings of another person. Hold family meetings when there are conflicts or challenges, and in those meetings give children a voice and encourage them to take the perspective of other family members. Listen carefully to your children's feelings, and ask your children to listen carefully to the views of others.
- 4. Accepting No:** Have children practice accepting no by having them look at you, take a deep and calming breath, and saying ok. Sometimes it is helpful for children to understand why, but sometimes No is No. If your child is upset, encourage them to practice calming strategies.
- 5. Positive Mind Set:** Practice gratitude by sharing one thing you are thankful for. At the end of the day, ask your child to share one or more things that went well during the day. This helps foster a positive mind set.