

Calming our Minds, Moving our Bodies

Early Years resource guide



Supporting emotional regulation and physical activity in early childhood is critical for healthy development and school readiness. The Calming Our Minds, Moving our Bodies resource aims to provide educators with practical, evidence-based resources to help children manage emotions and engage in active play.

These skills are linked to improved concentration, resilience and overall wellbeing. The loanable tubs enable equitable access to high-quality tools that promote both mental and physical health in the early years.

There are 3 loanable kits available for services across Cardinia Shire, City of Casey and City of Greater Dandenong. The loan period is for one term and there is a suite of physical and digital resources provided alongside the tub. Read this guide to explore how you can get the most out of the resources.

Purpose of the resources

- Support intentional teaching of physical activity and emotional regulation.
- Encourage development of fundamental movement skills.
- Build emotional regulation skills.
- Provide practical resources to support educators.



Who is it for?

- Children – physical resources are designed for use by children with supervision from educators.
- Educators – supporting resources and tools.
- Families – a range of information and resources.



Embedding practices around physical activity and emotional regulation links to EYLF v2.0 learning outcomes and supports areas of the NQS around health and relationships.

What is included in the loanable resource tub

Large bulky items: Nominate items required in EOI

- Wobble board
- Pop-up tent
- Stepping stones
- Peanut bouncing ball
- Balance beam
- Training cones
- Agility ladder
- Hopscotch rings



Smaller items

- What face is that? Emotions card game
- Noise cancelling headphones
- Rainbow pin art
- Feelings in a jar
- Small balls X 4
- Spiky ball
- Emotions placecard
- Books X 5
- Breathing board
- Emotions ball
- Breathing ball
- Calming posters
- Rainbow parachute
- Balloons
- Bean bags X 6
- Dice X 6 pieces



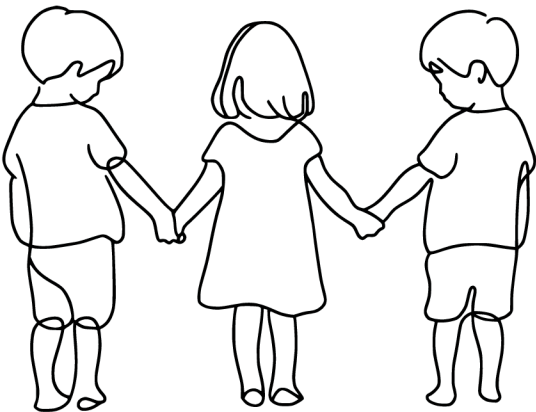
What is included in the resource tub

Guides and resources in the tub

How to use guide	Red flag identification guide
Educator reflection guide	Physical activity for infant development - tummy time
Talking Tub Guide	Tucker Turtle story
Activity cards	Book list
Emotional regulation and movement factsheet	Active for Life resources
FMS planner	Equipment to enhance active play

Online resources

Further resources are available on the webpage to support educators and families. Follow the QR code below to the webpage.



How to use the resource kit



Physical resources

- Explore the equipment in the loan tub.
- Use items to support physical activity and emotional regulation.
- Plan how to use these within your programming.



Supporting resources

- Utilise the activity cards and educator guides provided.
- Identify which resources may be useful for educators and families.



Resource webpage

- Further resources are available on the webpage.
- Explore these resources and identify those that are useful.



Implement

- Implement learning experiences with children in the rooms.
- Link activity cards to the equipment in the tubs. Use these or come up with your own.
- Share resources with families.



Reflect and support

- Identify children who may need additional support.
- Seek further support if needed.
- Provide feedback to your Health Promotion Practitioner.

Key concepts related to the resources

Movement, physical activity & play

- Supports our physical and mental wellbeing.
- Fundamental movement skills are the building blocks of movement.
- Fundamental movement skills develop through play and are used in everyday activities such as running, jumping and sport.
- Movement supports children's development, learning and emotional resilience.



Emotional regulation

Emotional regulation is the ability to understand and manage our feelings. This includes being able to:

- Notice what you are feeling
- Express emotions safely
- Calm down when upset
- Stay focused when excited or distracted.

Self-regulation supports children to learn how to cope in different situations which positively impacts learning, behaviour and social success.



Connection between movement & emotional regulation

- Our bodies and emotions are closely connected.
- How we feel can affect how our body reacts, and how we move our body can influence how we feel.
- Different types of movement can help regulate energy levels in the body.
- Building in positive activities and strategies can help improve our wellbeing and how we respond.

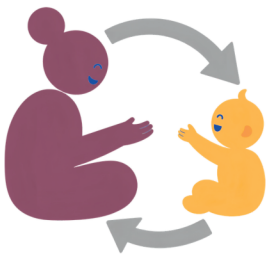


Key concepts related to the resources:

Emotional regulation and brain development

Everyday experiences and relationships help build neural pathways. Emotional regulation, like physical development, develops over time and is shaped by experiences. Supportive, responsive relationships with adults help children learn to recognise, express and manage their emotions.

Serve and return interactions



- Back-and-forth (responsive) interactions between children and caregivers help build emotional regulation skills.
- Naming and recognising what a child is doing or feeling (even before they can talk) supports brain development and emotional wellbeing.

What this can look like

- 'I see you're feeling upset.'
- 'Let's work this out together.'
- 'I hear you and I am here to listen.'
- 'I see you're feeling frustrated waiting for your turn.'
- 'You seem sad about not having more time to play with this.'



Window of tolerance

- This is the best state for children and adults to manage emotions, cope with stress and respond calmly.
- Outside this state, children may feel overwhelmed (fight or flight) or withdraw and shut down.
- Young children often need support and prompts to stay calm while they are still learning these skills.



Example prompts:

- 'I'm noticing that this may be too much at the moment. Let's focus on breathing together.'
- 'If you are feeling worried, I can help you feel safe. Let's slow down.'
- 'Let's stay together for the moment until you feel like you want to join in.'

Reference: **Center on the Developing Child**, Harvard University, viewed 4 June 2026, <<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/key-concept/serve-and-return/>>.

Child Australia, Window of Tolerance, viewed 10 June 2026, <<https://childdaustralia.org.au/professional-development/free-tips-resources/resources/window-of-tolerance/>>.

Tips for movement in small spaces

Having the space to undertake active play can be challenging, particularly in poor weather. Many of the activity cards support activities that can be done in a smaller space. Some further tips below may help.

Clear space

- Assess if any of the equipment inside can be moved around to support clearing a space for movement.

On-the-spot activities

- Use activities where children can move on the spot such as dance freezes, animal walks or copycat movements.

Regulation movement experience

- Getting children to check in with their body and do a mindful movement, such as pushing a ball along a masking tape line, can be a good way to incorporate movement in a slower way.

Movement breaks

- Use movement breaks between transitions to incorporate movement into the day.

Smaller groups

- If possible, split into small groups so the activities are more manageable in the space.

Adaptations and inclusivity

- Some children may need changes to activities so that they can participate.
- Different types of movement can help different children with emotional regulation.
- Refer to our resource: *Emotional regulation and movement factsheet*.
- To encourage inclusivity, also consider the points below.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

- Look for ways to celebrate culture in movement experiences.
- Visit [VAEAI](#) for ideas on embedding an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective on culture.
- Use the [Yulunga Traditional Indigenous Games](#) guide for other experiences.

Autism and ADHD

- Some children may need different adaptations to help them participate.
- [Autism Awareness Australia](#) provides tips for active play.
- Simpler and visual instructions may be useful. Complete the [WE PLAY — Wellness Enhancing Physical Activity for Young Children](#) professional learning for further guidance.

Contact

For further support please contact your local Health Promotion Practitioner or contact healthpromotion@monashhealth.org

Additional support is also available through:

- Preschool Field Officers
- KESO's
- Southern Melbourne Early Childhood Improvement Branch
- LOOKOUT Early Childhood.



References

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** 2025, Physical activity boosts brain health, CDC, viewed 4 June 2026, <<https://www.cdc.gov/physical-activity/features/boost-brain-health.html>>.
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- **Child Mind Institute**, How can we help kids with self-regulation, viewed 3 June 2026, <<https://childmind.org/article/can-help-kids-self-regulation/>>.
- **KU Children's Services**, Emotional Regulation Guidebook, viewed 3 June 2026, <<https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/resources/emotional-regulation-guidebook>>.
- **Raising Children Network**, Self-regulation: children and teenagers, viewed 3 June 2026, <<https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/behaviour/understanding-behaviour/self-regulation>>.
- **Sydney Children's Hospitals Network** 2025, Movement guidelines for children, NSW Government, viewed 4 June 2026, <<https://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/kids-health-hub/physical-activity/movement-guidelines>>.
- **Talking Tubs™ – The Spark for Child-Led Planning with Floorbooks®**, Dr Claire Warden, Mindstretchers Academy, viewed 12 May 2026, <https://mindstretchers.academy/blogs/news/talking-tubs%E2%84%A2-the-spark-for-child-led-planning-with-floorbooks%C2%AE?srsId=AfmBOooCXDJWK8C2ZSbqkZBJE0h_OfHIE590YiRELgxUs36KQ3qR-gjG>.
- **The Zones of Regulation** 2026, The Zones of Regulation, viewed 4 June 2026, <<https://zonesofregulation.com/>>.
- **World Health Organization (WHO)** 2024, Physical activity, WHO, viewed 4 June 2026, <<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>>.