

## Active Calming Centre

All behaviour is a non-verbal form of communication, it is our job to teach the children in our care how to express their feelings through healthy and appropriate behaviours. When a child is feeling anger their body is in a state where sitting and taking deep breaths would be difficult. They may need some gross motor movement to get rid of that energy. An Active Calming Centre guides children through physical and mental tasks that help them calm down and cooperate. This area can be used before going into to the Safe Place, as a stand alone brain break, a transition helper, or an “anytime” calming strategy for those “busy” bodies.

## How do I build an Active Calming Centre?

Conscious Discipline ([www.consciousdiscipline.com](http://www.consciousdiscipline.com)) does have tools for this centre available for purchase, however it is not necessary. With some inexpensive purchases from the dollar store, you can put together your own tools. The pictures to the left depict an active calming circuit created with minimal supplies.

- **Push the Wall:** This will allow children to engage those big muscle groups that hold on to rage. Attach 2 handprints to the wall. Have the children put their hands on the hand prints and “push the wall down” for 10 seconds. Take a small break and repeat 3 times.
- **Stomp it Out:** Provide a mat (the squishy foam ones are the best), have the children stomp their anger out for 10 seconds, then have a break and repeat 3 times.
- **Stretch it Out:** Use exercise bands for this activity. Have the children stand on the band and use it to stretch. Hold the stretch for 5 seconds then release. Repeat 3 times.

Other options for younger children include: simple yoga poses, jumping up and down, frog hops, or jumping jacks.

★ **\*Remember to explicitly teach the children how to use the tools while they are in a calm state, so they can access them while dysregulated.**

