



Listening Time:



36:54

## SEASON 2, EPISODE 10

# The Key to Calming Down

There are MANY strategies that children (and all of us) can use to regulate our emotions. In this episode of Little Kids, Big Hearts — The Key to Calming Down — we practice some of the strategies people can use to calm down.

Practicing ways to calm down and regain equilibrium can help children to develop strong habits that will help them in school and social settings — and be useful as they grow!

Finding strategies that work for an individual child can be a process — and not every strategy works for every person. Some children find calming corners to be helpful. Calming jars or stress balls work for others. For some, listening to music, working with play dough, drawing a picture, or meditating works. Others need to get their energy out by going on a walk, jumping on a trampoline, running around, or even screaming into a pillow. The key is to practice in calm moments, so that when a big feeling comes, we are more ready.

At every step, parents, teachers, and other trusted grown-ups can be there to validate children's feelings and help them to manage stressful moments and big feelings.

On the pages that follow, you'll find some useful strategies you can use to help children practice calm down strategies they can use.



# Little Kids, Big Hearts Podcast

## Learning Extensions

### Imagination Vacation

K-3rd Grade



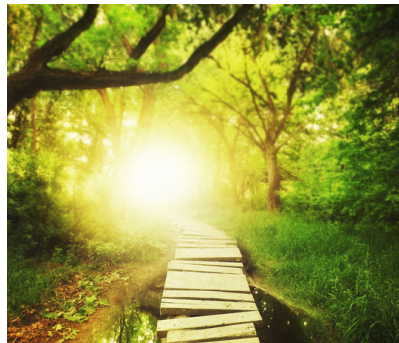
#### Goals

- ♥ Manage stress and build self-regulation skills
- ♥ Cultivate imagination skills
- ♥ Build trust among classmates

#### Instructions



Play "The Key To Calming Down" episode. In the episode, there's a visualization exercise, which the students in your classroom are going to do together with your guidance. Invite the children to lie down on the rug or find a comfortable seat. Instruct them to close their eyes and start taking deep breaths together.






# Imagination Vacation

## VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

### Imagination Vacation

 Read the words below to your students, who are sitting around you with eyes closed.

Imagine that you are in a white room with a big door.

In your pocket you feel a key. The key is beautiful and unique. And it opens the door in front of you.

What you see behind that door can be any place you love, or feel safe. It can be a real place you've been to or somewhere you've seen in a book or in your dreams.

Look around.

What do you see around you?

What colors do you see?

What do you feel on your skin?

Can you smell anything?

Is there a breeze? Or is the air still?

Now, look to your right. There is a comfortable place to cuddle up and relax. What does it look like? What does it feel like to sit down?

Over in the distance you see an animal coming into view.

It's getting closer. What animal do you see? This animal has arrived to protect you and give you comfort. It is wise and kind. Your animal gets closer and sits down next to you. Now that your animal is here, you feel very calm.

Your animal shares with you that this is your calming space — your safe space.

You can come here anytime. All you need to do is close your eyes, take a deep breath and imagine that key in your hand. You will be instantly transported here and feel the safety of this place.

Now, we take three deep breaths, so we can come back and share.



# Imagination Vacation Discussion

## Discussion



Invite the students to share with the following question prompts:

- What did you see when you opened your door?
- How did the air feel? Smell? Did you hear anything?
- Where did you cuddle up to relax?
- What animal came to see you?
- What did your key look like?

## Activity



Invite students to draw or paint a picture of their special place, animal, or key! Once they've finished, help them to write a few words beside their picture to explain what they saw.





# Little Kids, Big Hearts Podcast

## Learning Extensions

### Make A Feelings Pillow

K-3rd Grade



#### Goals

- ♥ Encourage self-expression
- ♥ Build fine motor skills
- ♥ Understand feelings and cultivate empathy for others
- ♥ Manage stress and build self-regulation skills

#### Instructions



##### Play the Episode

If the class hasn't yet listened to the Little Kids, Big Hearts "The Key to Calming Down" episode, start by listening! It's wherever you listen to podcasts. Learn more (or listen) at [playsparkler.org/podcast](https://playsparkler.org/podcast).

#### Materials



Get Ready! Here's what you'll need:

- ♥ Plain white pillow case
- ♥ Fabric markers
- ♥ Poly-fil or other stuffing for your pillow
- ♥ Needle and thread to sew your pillow shut once filled

#### Activity



Invite each student to use fabric markers to decorate their feelings pillow. You can play gentle music in the classroom while the students are working. Children can use the "safe space" they imagined on their "Imagination Vacation" as inspiration or anything else to make the pillow uniquely theirs.

#### Discussion



Discuss/demonstrate the ways the pillow can be used when feeling:

- ♥ Happy (Tossing It In the air with joy)
- ♥ Sad (Hugging, resting on It)
- ♥ Angry (Getting out aggression)

Commit to rules as a class to keep each other and the pillows safe from harm such as:

- ♥ Respect each other's feeling pillows
- ♥ Never throw your pillow at another person



### Little Kids, Big Breaths

K-3rd Grade



#### Goals

- Help students learn some of the many ways they can use breath to regulate emotions
- Encourage children to find a breathing technique that feels right for them

#### Instructions



Watch our video "Little Kids, Big Breaths" to learn breathing techniques that help us move through big feelings



Video is linked [here](#), or scan the QR Code above.

#### Activity



Practice the techniques shown in the video tutorial. Which one is your favorite?

- Blowing Bubbles
- Birthday Candles
- Five-Finger Breathing
- Balloon Breathing
- Lion Breaths
- Bumblebee Breath

Invite the children to draw a picture that represents their favorite technique. Then hang them on the wall as a reference when we need a reminder!