

10 for 10

Ten Activities for when emotions run high

Children's grief can often look like "big energy". Big energy is a way children express different emotions and is an important part of play. Hitting, kicking, zoning out, not listening, and yelling are some examples of what big energy can look like. Our goal is to help children identify what they are feeling and then find ways to safely express them. This teaches them that it's okay to have strong emotions. Here are several ideas for helping children express and manage big energy that can be done either at home or school. You don't need to purchase anything special for these activities, many items can be found at home or in the classroom — get creative!

You can use this explanation sheet along with the 10 for 10 worksheet that children can use to pick an activity to express "big energy." Adults have "big energy" too, so don't forget to do some of these activities for yourself! Note: While choices are always encouraged to empower grieving kids, sometimes their elevated emotional state is better served by an adult choosing instead. If this is the case, you can refer to the Zones of Regulation sheet to match color-coded activities with children's emotional and physical state.

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Ten Activities for when emotions run high

Use an “angry box”

Help children build an “angry box” filled with items that they can use to safely express their anger. Items may be: a pillow to yell into, newspaper to shred, empty plastic bottles to stomp on, bean bags to throw, bubble wrap to pop, a timer to set for doing jumping jacks.

Smell the flower, blow out the candle

Ask children to imagine they are smelling a flower on the inhale and blowing out a candle on the exhale. They can hold a finger up in front of their mouth and nose as a prompt.

I spy

Invite children to “Find 5” things of certain groupings (“Find me 5 red things” “Find me 5 soft things”) and then drop the number down to 3 (“Find me 3 things that are orange”).

Move

Do 5 jumping jacks or push-ups

Take the stage

Pull out puppets, stuffed animals, or dolls and ask children to tell you a story about what they are thinking and feeling.

Dance party!

Invite children to dance out anger, sadness, happiness, or whatever they are feeling in the moment.

Choose your own

Choice is really important for grieving children. Ask them what activity they think would be helpful for them.

Music

Play a calming song and invite children to slowly sit or lie down to listen.

Connect

Invite children to fill out the “People who like me” sheet. This can be brought into the Cozy Corner for self-soothing and reassurance.

Cozy Corner

Create an area in the classroom or at home that kids help design with comforting items.

Zones of Regulation



Red Zone: Intense Emotions

- Anger/rage
- Very scared
- Explosive behavior
- Inconsolable
- Extreme happiness
- Looks like:
 - Lack of reasoning
 - Destroying class/bedroom
 - Throwing



Yellow Zone: Elevated Emotions

- Frustrated
- Excited
- Silly
- Have the wiggles
- Nervous
- Looks like:
 - Hunched shoulders
 - Raised voice
 - Difficulty listening/responding to directions



Green Zone: Optimal Learning

- Calm
- Able to connect
- Alert
- Focused
- Ready to learn
- Looks like:
 - Relaxed shoulders
 - Eye contact
 - Wants to engage



Blue Zone: Feeling Down

- Sad
- Low energy
- Sleepy
- Disinterested
- Moving slowly
- Looks like:
 - Not wanting to play
 - Crying
 - Stomach aches/headaches

