

9K: ACTIVITIES FOR CALMING AND WAKING BABIES AND CHILDREN

Babies and children will feed best when they are calm and alert. This chart offers suggestions for ways to help calm and wake children of all ages for participating in daily feeding routines — and throughout other moments during the day.

Calming activities are most often used with the child who has a hypersensitive sensory system.

Waking/Alerting activities are most often used with the child who has a hyposensitive sensory system.

CALMING ACTIVITIES

- Use activities that calm a child’s body before feedings, especially if they become overstimulated.
- ① Use rhythmic, repetitive touch, movements and sounds to calm and soothe a child such as:
 - ⇒ patting on the back or bottom using a rhythmic pattern
 - ⇒ making a repetitive “shushing” sound
 - ⇒ bouncing gently using a steady rhythm
 - ⇒ rocking in arms or a chair using a steady rhythm
 - ⇒ swinging or swaying in arms using a steady rhythm
 - ⇒ singing
 - ⇒ listening to soothing music or music with a strong and steady beat
 - ⇒ massaging the body using a rhythmic pattern
- ② Offer age-appropriate objects to suck on, mouth or chew before and after meals such as:

WAKING/ALERTING ACTIVITIES

- Use activities that wake or alert a child’s body before feedings, especially if they tend to be understimulated.
- ① Use gentle activities before or during feedings or that wake a child if she has fallen asleep such as:
 - ⇒ changing her diaper
 - ⇒ changing her clothes
 - ⇒ stroking her feet
 - ⇒ holding and talking to her
 - ⇒ bouncing gently
 - ⇒ patting on the back or bottom
 - ⇒ burping
- ② Offer age-appropriate objects or activities to wake up the face and mouth before eating such as:
 - ⇒ facial or body massage
 - ⇒ toothbrushes (vibrating or regular)
 - ⇒ teethers

CH. 9 | 9K: ACTIVITIES FOR CALMING AND WAKING BABIES AND CHILDREN

- ⇒ pacifiers or binkies
 - ⇒ Teethers
 - ⇒ Oral motor objects (ChewyTubes, Chewelry, ARK Chew Toys, etc.)
 - ⇒ a child's hands or fingers are OK too
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- ③ *Provide dim lighting or a darker room with minimal visual distractions before, during or after feedings for calming an upset child.*
 - ④ *Feed in a quiet space with minimal sounds and voices.*
 - ⑤ *Interact using slower rates of movement, softer voices or sounds and reduced animation.*
 - ⑥ *Use consistent activities and routines so a child knows what to expect, which reduces stress and creates calmness.*
 - ⑦ *Swaddle, wear, hold or carry a child.*
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- ⇒ Oral motor objects (ChewyTubes, Chewelry, ARK Chew Toys, etc.)
 - ③ *Provide brighter lighting or a room with more light and/or sound before, during or after feedings for a sleepy child.*
 - ④ *Feed in a space with typical noise and sound levels.*
 - ⑤ *Interact using faster rates of movement, louder voices or sounds and increased animation.*
 - ⑥ *Use consistent activities and routines so a child knows what to expect, which reduces stress and creates a readiness for participating in feeding.*
 - ⑦ *Use a well-supported position or seating that engages a child's entire body.*