

# REFRESHING RECESS EXPANSION PROGRAM NEWSLETTER # 10: Coping Toolbox

## ● What is a Coping Toolbox?

A *coping toolbox* is a collection of healthy items or positive strategies that a child can use when he/she is feeling anxious, worried, or distressed. There are an infinite number of coping methods that can be effective for emotional regulation and calming techniques, depending on the individual. Throughout the Refreshing Recess program, we have introduced several different tools that students can put in their toolbox. During this week, they will choose from this assortment, as well as write in any additional positive strategies to create their own individualized “toolbox” of coping skills to draw from in the future.

### CHECK THIS OUT!

- The Coping Skills Toolbox: <https://www.bcbe.org/cms/lib/AL01901374/Centricity/Domain/1760/Coping%20skills%20Toolkit.pdf>
- Calm Moments Cards: [https://everymomentcounts.org/view.php?nav\\_id=213](https://everymomentcounts.org/view.php?nav_id=213)

## ● Calm Moments Cards

School personnel can support the child’s coping toolbox through the use of embed coping strategies within the school environment. Every Moment Counts has created a series of Calm Moments Cards, carefully designed to help diverse school personnel recognize signs of stress and anxiety in students. The cards also provide ideas and suggestions for applying evidence-based strategies to help reduce these negative feelings and enhance emotional well-being in order to improve school success (Deinger, Kolic, & Young, 2014). Specially designed Calm Moments Cards are available for 17 different situational stressors that are common throughout a child’s school day. These situations include:

- Start of the day
- Test taking
- Transitioning between subjects
- Transitioning between classrooms
- Using the restroom
- Playing at recess
- Returning from recess
- Participating in physical education
- Eating in the cafeteria
- Participating in assemblies
- Participating in art
- Participating in music
- Writing/completing work
- Emergency situations
- End of the day routine
- Completing homework
- Participating in parties or school events



## ● Each Calm Moments Card Includes:

- **Situational Stressor** (e.g. playing at recess)
- **Triggers** → possible causes of stress and anxiety related to the situation (e.g. student is unable to enter or initiate play with others)
- **Thinking Strategies** → student positive affirmations, positive adult responses, and activities to facilitate positive thinking (e.g. “My courage is stronger than my fear.”)
- **Focusing & Calming strategies** → Movement poses, breathing exercises, and activities (e.g. Going on an “Aware Walk”)
- **Sensory Strategies** → touch, taste, movement, visual, and smells that may be calming (e.g. Offer a water mister or an ice pack)
- **Teaching Moment** → Simple, evidence-based explanations supporting the use of the strategies and activities that are listed on the card

## ● What's Next?

Practice, practice, practice! Initially, children may continue to need help identifying when their coping toolbox is needed. Assist them in choosing an appropriate coping skill and practice implementing it in real-time. Routine review of the coping skill while the children are calm and relaxed can also help to reinforce the strategies.



Ongoing use of Calm Moment Cards is an additional way to support this routine of identifying emotions and implementing calming and sensory-based activities before or during the situational stressor. Consistent use of these cards can proactively address positive mental health, effecting the overall school climate.

Davis, P. (n.d.). The coping skills toolbox. Retrieved from [https://www.bcbe.org/cms/lib/AL01901374/Centricity/Domain/1760/Coping\\_Skills\\_Toolkit.pdf](https://www.bcbe.org/cms/lib/AL01901374/Centricity/Domain/1760/Coping_Skills_Toolkit.pdf)

Deiningner, A., Kolic, S., Young, D. (2014b). Calm Moments Cards. *U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs*. [https://everymomentcounts.org/view.php?nav\\_id=62](https://everymomentcounts.org/view.php?nav_id=62)

Halloran, J. (2016). One of the best coping techniques for anxiety - Make a coping skills toolbox! Retrieved from <https://copingskillsforkids.com/blog/2016/6/6/how-to-make-a-coping-skills-toolbox-for-your-child>

