

My Calming Card

A Mindfulness Desktop Resource

This social-emotional desktop tool gives your students the dignity of discreet communication with you and the power of calming mindfulness right at their fingertips.

Supplies

- Printer
- Paper (cardstock will make a sturdier card)
- Scissors
- Tape for desk
- Paperclips (or clothespins for use with sturdier cardstock or laminated cards)
- Optional: Laminator

Printables

- Instructions
- Mindfulness Grounding Exercises
- My Calming Card (Designed for left- or right-handed students)

Why try "My Calming Card"?

While all students can benefit from mindfulness exercises, students who are experiencing the effects of trauma need additional support with emotional regulation and are more likely to need discreet methods of communication with their instructors. This My Calming Card provides visual cues for self-regulation grounding exercises and a Readiness Zones strip, a non-verbal communication tool for restoring executive function when students feel overwhelmed.

Demme® LEARNING

demmelearning.com

REV0626

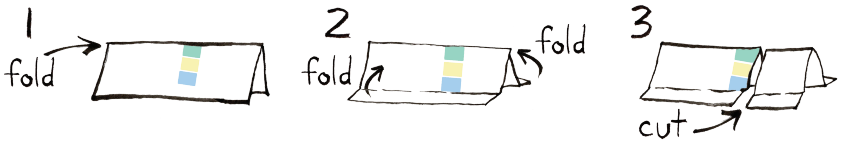
Getting Ready

- **Print** the My Calming Card *in color*.
- **Folding:**

  1) Fold the My Calming Card paper in half along the center *solid line*, so the print is on the outside.

  2) Fold up the short strips on both sides, along each *solid line*. (These are the feet.)

  3) Cut along the *grey dashed line*.

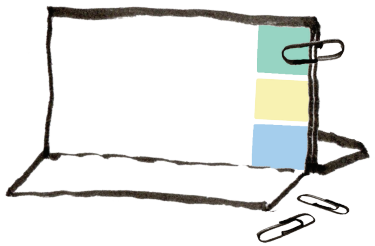


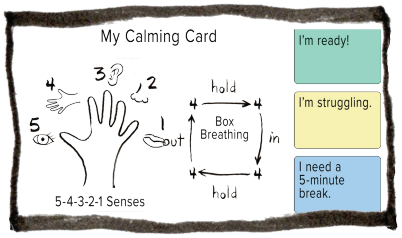
- **Arrange** the card on the desk with the colored Readiness Zone rectangles on the student's dominant-hand side (right- or left-hand side).
- **Tape** the card feet to the desktop.
- **Clip** the paperclip or clothespin on the edge with the colored Readiness Zone rectangles. (For left-handed students, this will be on the left side of the card.)

Optional: **Laminate** the card.

(If laminating, complete Step 3 first to cut the instruction strip away from the card. Then laminate and continue with Steps 1 and 2. After folding, apply tape or glue as needed between the upright sections to keep them together.)

Note: If you would prefer a flat card that can be taped flat to a desk, simply cut the printed My Calming Card in half and use one side of the design. Instead of a paperclip or clothespin, have students use a pompom, game piece, or small disc or coin to indicate their Readiness Zone.



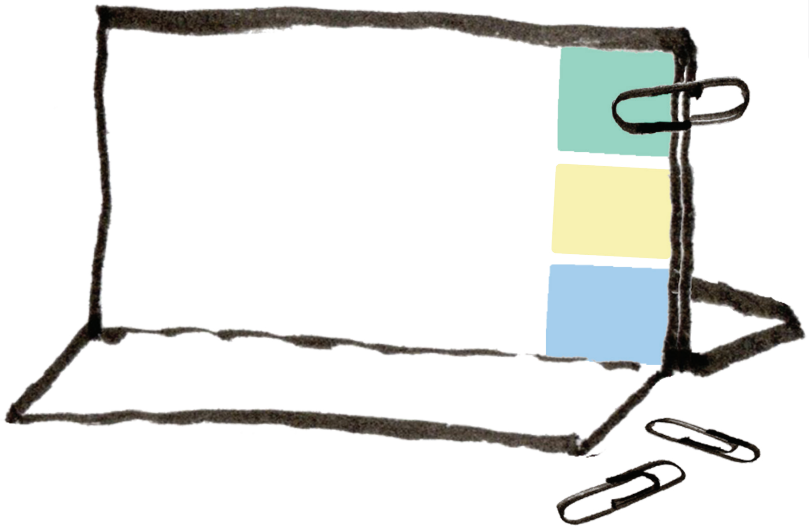


© 2026 Demme Learning | REV0626

The Readiness Zones

Students move their paperclip or clothespin up or down the three Readiness Zone rectangles to discreetly indicate when they are ready to learn, when they are struggling to concentrate, or when they need a 5-minute break.

- **Demonstrate** how students can use their paperclip or clothespin to show you which Readiness Zone they are in *at that moment*.
- **Explain** the three Readiness Zones and what students may do when they need a 5-minute break.
- **Reassure** students that they have tools and support that can help them get back into the Green Zone.



Readiness Zones

- **Green Zone:** I'm ready! Student is ready to learn and able to focus.
- **Yellow Zone:** I'm struggling. Student is having difficulty concentrating or understanding what is expected of them.
- **Blue Zone:** I need a 5-minute break. Student needs a break.

Note: Make it clear where they may go during a break—for example, to get a drink of water, use the restroom, sit quietly in the hallway, or visit a designated counselor, support teacher, or sensory calming space.

© 2026 Demme Learning | REV0626

Mindfulness Grounding Exercises

Practice both mindfulness exercises on the card with your students. These exercises can be used while seated at their desk, any time they aren't in the Green Zone and need some help refocusing on the moment. They can also be used any time they feel anxious, worried, or distracted.

Use the Mindfulness Grounding Exercises page to demonstrate with and post in the classroom.

5-4-3-2-1 Senses

Focus on each of your 5 senses in this moment:

- **5 See** — Think of **5** things you can **see** right now.
  Examples: window, trees, desk, sky, carpet, books, paper.
- **4 Touch** — Think about 4 things you can touch right now.
  Examples: chair, desk, clothing, pencil.
- **3 Hear** — Think of 3 things you can hear right now.
  Examples: birds chirping, a fan blowing, clothes rustling.
- **2 Smell** — Think of 2 things you can smell right now.
  Examples: a pencil, crayon, lotion, food, fresh cut grass.
- **1 Taste** — Think of 1 thing you can taste right now.
  Examples: toothpaste, breakfast, snack.

Note: This exercise should feel calming and grounding. If a student is struggling, encourage them to think of a favorite taste, smell, etc., rather than push through frustration.

Box Breathing

Slow, steady counting and breathing can help students relax and return to the present moment. Direct students to look at the box on the card and notice it has 4 sides. Starting at the top right corner, they can gently trace the box with a finger or follow the arrows with their eyes:

- **Breathe** in as you slowly count to **4** seconds.
- **Hold** your breath as you slowly count to **4** seconds.
- **Breathe** out as you slowly count to **4** seconds.
- **Hold** again as you slowly count to **4** seconds.

Note: This exercise should be calm and relaxing, not a race or a breath-holding challenge.

© 2026 Demme Learning | REV0626