

## Classroom strategies

### Hints for interactions – what's worked so far

- Using a quiet but firm voice.
- Holding Kaedyn's hands and applying gentle pressure, and prompting for eye contact when providing instructions or participating in co-regulation. **This can only happen if Kaedyn gives his hands willingly. Taking his hands without his consent will be perceived by his body as a threat and will escalate the situation.**
- Clear and repeated expectations for EVERY TASK. Remember Kaedyn's memory is affected by trauma and he is unable to hold many instructions.
- Providing a sense of control and power by offering choices.

### Calm space:

Allocate a space in the room for Kaedyn to access during times of dysregulation. Equip the space with sensory objects to assist in regulation. Possible tools could be:

Something soft to stroke

Something squishy to squeeze

A balloon to prompt him to remember his breathing techniques

A heavy blanket or towel that can be put over him

**Please note: Calming his body does not come naturally to Kaedyn and can actually feel distressing for him due to his history of harm. Kaedyn will need to be supported to learn how to use this space, and to tolerate the sensation of calming. Also, we have seen that Kaedyn best processes his dysregulation through movement. As such, the success of in-classroom strategies may be limited but will help support overall.**

### Relaxation in the morning and after breaks.

As meditation and relaxation are learned skills, students will need to be supported by a guiding teacher. Use music or relaxations scripts to provide the children with something to focus on. Prompt children to consider their breathing and the way their body and mind feels (relaxed, quiet, sinking into the ground, resting gently etc).

### Physical strategies to support regulation:

Sprinting activities at regular intervals.

Begin with a short time frame of 15 minutes at which point Kaedyn is taken outside to complete a set sprinting task before returning to the classroom. In time, stretch the time frame out to 30 minutes, but allowing space for Kaedyn to identify times in between when he feels like he needs to

have a sprint. Supporting Kaedyn in identifying these times will help him learn to read his body and learn how to control it.

**Please note:** Kaedyn will need very clear expectations of the process for it to be successful. Be sure he is aware of the limits of the set task. Acknowledge before going out EVERY TIME what the process is, and that when it's time to come back in, you know he will feel frustrated or disappointed, but that he will take 3 balloon breaths and then will come back to class, knowing that in another 15 minutes he will be able to have another run. Whatever the activity that is set, count down each turn so Kaedyn has ample time to prepare for the end of the activity. When Kaedyn attempts to negotiate or becomes dysregulated or emotional at the end of the activity, follow the co-regulation process. Acknowledge the feeling you can see, provide empathy by stating that you can understand why he is feeling that way, but that he knew the activity would come to an end and that he would need to go back to class. Prompt him to take his breaths and prepare for entering the classroom. Remember that Kaedyn is still learning how to control his body and feelings. Make sure you 'sit with it' while he practices mastering these learned skills. It won't work first time, every time. We need to be patient.

**Biggest challenges to supporting Kaedyn with Co-regulation:**

- Our own feelings of frustration or anxiety, particularly when Kaedyn, another child or property are at risk
- Taking time to sit with the discomfort while Kaedyn practices the skills. This takes time and resources.