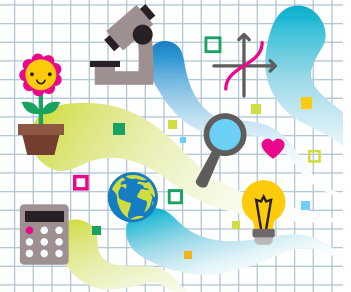




# HEADS IN, HEARTS IN

## Calming Jar Instructions for Set-Up



### Supplies

- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- Clear plastic container such as a water bottle, pop bottle, juice bottle or mason jar with a top
- Warm water
- Liquid food coloring
- Clear tacky glue (3 ounces)
- Glitter glue (3 ounces)
- Glitter (ultrafine if possible)
- Strong holding glue (such as Super Glue)
- Paper towels (for cleanup as needed)
- Plastic tablecloth
- Display table

### Activity Preparation

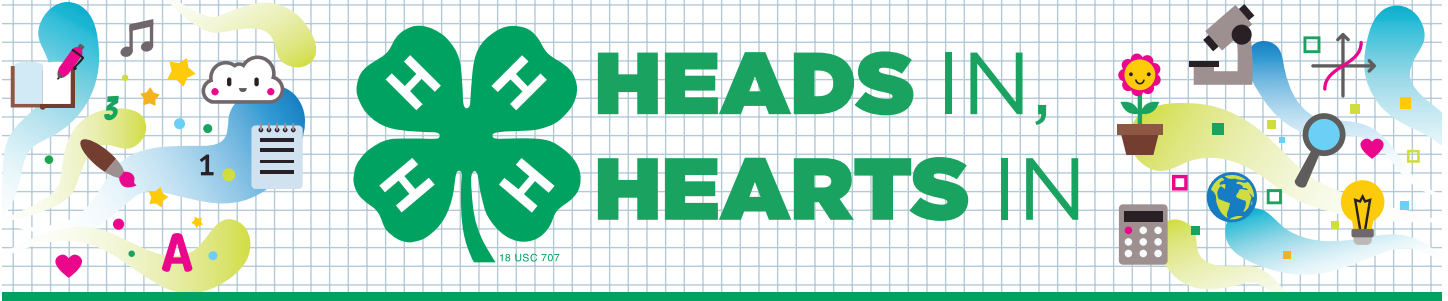
- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Arrange the supplies, making sure to keep strong holding glue out of reach of young children.

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The “Calming Jar” activity also appears in two places on the Michigan State University Extension website as “Calming Jar Instructions” as part of MI Stronger Family and as “Calming Jar Instructions” in the Early Childhood Development section:  
<https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/calming-jar-instructions>



# Calming Jar

## Guide for Families

### Learning Objectives

#### What you need to know:

Social emotional health is a critical component of healthy development for young children. Social emotional development includes the ability to identify and label or name emotions, and find appropriate ways to express or manage those emotions. For young children, emotions can be overwhelming. Since they do not have the skills to handle their strong emotions, they might act out, get clingy or withdraw. You can help them manage their emotions by giving them permission for their emotions, helping to identify how they feel, supporting them and teaching them emotion regulation strategies.

**Self-regulation** means controlling your own thoughts, feelings and behaviors. A calming jar can help children learn how to control their emotions and to self-regulate. Since young children find it hard to self-regulate, it takes lots of practice and support from you. As the adult, you can help by showing them techniques and methods to get their brains back to cool and calm when they experience strong emotions.

#### What you will do and learn:

In this activity, you will make a calming jar with the child. As you make the calming jar, let the child choose the colors and add the ingredients. Once the calming jar is made, shake it up and encourage the child to watch the glitter slowly settle to the bottom of the jar. When the child is feeling overwhelmed or experiencing a strong emotion, encourage them to shake up the jar and wait for the glitter to settle to the bottom of the jar. This gives them a few moments to calm down and manage their strong feelings. Have them shake up the calming jar as many times as they need until they feel calmer.

### Instructions

1. Clean out the container and remove any labels so you can see through the container.
2. Fill the container  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of warm water.
3. Add a few drops of food coloring (add more or less depending on the size of your container). Note: You do not want the water in your jar to be so dark that you cannot see the glitter.
4. Add clear tacky glue, glitter glue and glitter. Place the lid tightly back on the jar and shake it up until the tacky glue, glitter glue and glitter dissolve into the water. Note: Try adding a little bit of each ingredient at a time, putting the lid back on tightly and shaking it up to see how it looks. This way you do not put too much of anything in. Use paper towels as needed for cleanup.
5. Use the strong holding glue to glue the top onto your calming jar.
6. Shake up the jar and enjoy! **Note: Wait a few hours for the holding glue to dry before leaving the child unattended with the jar.**