



Featured Topic
**Early Learning:
*Calming Ourselves in
Stressful Moments™***

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Welcome to *Outcomes*™

I'm pleased to welcome you to our inaugural issue of ***Outcomes***, a new publication from Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (C.H.E.F.®). This report offers inspiring and informative **outcomes** on key health education and prevention initiatives undertaken by C.H.E.F. and/or our partners.

Each issue of ***Outcomes*** will showcase key learning related to a specific health education topic, such as findings and testimonials from real people in the field. Our goal is to provide valuable outcomes that we hope you'll find relevant and useful.

The featured topic in this first issue of ***Outcomes*** is C.H.E.F.'s unique early childhood program, *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments™*. This interactive program helps young children and their caregivers manage stress. C.H.E.F. has gathered a number of valuable outcomes from early childhood professionals and family members who are using this program.

We welcome your feedback on our first issue of ***Outcomes***. I invite you to drop us a note with your comments at outcomes@chef.org, so we can make ***Outcomes*** even better.

Thank you for your efforts in health promotion for children and their families and for your interest in and support of our early learning programs and services.

Warmest regards,

Larry Clark
President & CEO
Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (C.H.E.F.)

"One out of three American children suffers from illnesses that are either caused by stress or exacerbated by it."

—David Marks, MD, Former Medical Director,
New England Center for Headache, Stamford, CT

Background

C.H.E.F.®'s Leadership in Early Learning and Development

For over 30 years, C.H.E.F. has been recognized as a national leader in educational programs and services that support the healthy development of youth. In support of that history, C.H.E.F. has developed three early childhood programs geared toward promoting early learning, school readiness, and healthy development: *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments*™, *Social Beginnings*®, and *Healthy Beginnings*™. For more information, please visit www.chef.org.



The *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments* program includes:

- *Trainer's Guide* (with CD-ROM)
- *Calming Cards*
- *Stress-Reducing Booklet*

C.H.E.F. also provides program training.

About the *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments* Program

The *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments* program helps young children (ages 3–7) and their caregivers manage stress. It supports the important connection between health education practitioners, early childhood professionals, families, and children. With this program, adults learn to manage stress as they guide children to manage stressful moments.

In developing this program, C.H.E.F. incorporated the latest child-development research from leading experts in the field, including: Robert Sapolsky, PhD; Herbert Benson, MD; James Humphrey, EdD; Jeffrey Allen, MEd; Roger Klein, PsyD; and Georgia Witkin, PhD. The program was written by Victoria Tennant, MEd, an early childhood brain development and stress management consultant.

The *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments* program uses a combination of Calming Activities and *The Calming Skill*™ to help adults guide children to manage stress.

- **Calming Activities:** These fun, easy, calming strategies are supported by research as effective stress-management methods. The Calming Activities fall within three developmental areas: (1) moving and sensing; (2) seeing and imagining; and (3) listening, talking, and singing.
- **The Calming Skill:** A five-step process for adults and children to use to calm themselves. When adults and children use this skill, they feel, think, learn, and behave better—everyone benefits.

With over 25 years of experience in training educators, C.H.E.F. understands the importance of high-quality trainings to ensure effective program implementation. The *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments* program includes a 12-hour training for trainers and a six-hour training for early childhood professionals.

The Calming Skill™

1. I Notice My Body Signals
2. I Stop and Breathe
3. I Calm Myself
4. Now I Feel...
5. I Tell Myself Positive Words

The Calming Skill™ is a trademark of and the five-step model is copyrighted by Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (C.H.E.F.). Duplication of either the title or the model, except when part of the training program *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments*, is prohibited without expressed written permission from the distributor. All rights reserved.



Early Learning Outcomes

Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments™

Evaluation Background

C.H.E.F.® surveyed a large sample of participants from the *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments™* trainings to determine how they used the skills and materials after the training, and the degree to which the training was successful in changing behavior (based on real-life stories and testimonials).

The evaluation was designed to identify the specific activities that participants used, and how they rated the value of the training and materials after they had some experience using them.

Evaluation Methodology

During the first phase of evaluation, each participant received four copies of a questionnaire along with stamped return envelopes to return each week in which they used activities from the program. They were given an incentive of a weekly prize drawing for a tote bag or a calming music CD.

Between March and June 2004, C.H.E.F. conducted 13 trainings with a total of 463 participants. In the follow-up, 90 participants returned 210 questionnaires.

During the second phase of evaluation in June 2006, each participant received an online questionnaire asking them to share a brief story about their use of the *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments* program with a child and/or adult, and what benefit, if any, the individual received from it.

“Children are increasingly exposed to situations that are new, changing and perplexing. The strategies outlined in the Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments program will be useful to the teachers and caregivers of children. Knowing how to bring down their state of anxiety is the best insurance for children being able to cope with demand for change, which increases as they enter school and become adolescents.”

—Kathryn E. Barnard, PhD, FAAN,
Former Professor, Family & Child Nursing,
University of Washington, Seattle, WA





“For the past two years, this has been the most requested staff training in our program for pre-service, and also at the local Early Childhood Conference in the spring. The teachers and early learning professionals, both at our agency and in the community, take it over and over again.”

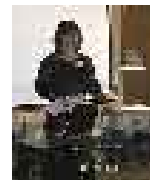
—BJ Hellman, Children’s Programs Coordinator, Chelan-Douglas Child Services Association, Wenatchee, WA

Evaluation Outcomes, Part 1

Was the *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments*™ training valuable in helping participants use the activities and skills?

According to respondents, there was significant value in participating in C.H.E.F.’s *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments*™ training. It was perceived as practical, informative, easy to understand, and hands-on, with participants walking away ready to begin using the techniques immediately.

- **95%** of respondents rated the training very useful or useful in helping them use the activities and skills
- **81%** of respondents rated the *Stress-Reducing Booklet* very useful or useful
- **93%** of respondents rated the *Calming Cards* very useful or useful



“From the feedback we received from our staff, the program was well received and useable, not only in a classroom setting, but with the teachers themselves. One child I was working with could not get enough of the strategies for calming himself. We did two or so every time we met.”

—Rick Goudzwaard, School Counselor, Breidablik Elementary School, Poulbo, WA

“I have done many trainings for child care providers for the past two years. Each time, the providers are very excited that they have some hands-on tools that they can use with the children in their daily life. The activities in the book are very useful. Some teachers said they can use the same activities for themselves.”

—Cam Do Wong, Community Health Educator, Seattle & King County Public Health—Kids Get Care, Seattle, WA

“I have had adults in the training actually be brought to tears, realizing the amount of stressful moments they have and how to better calm themselves. Staff members have let each other know how helpful this training was to them and how they are using it in their classrooms.”

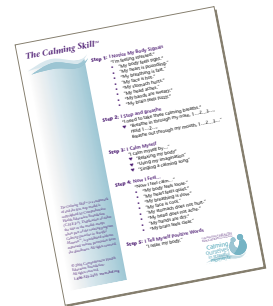
—Cheryl L’Ecuyer, Human Resources Assistant, Educational Opportunites for Children & Families, Vancouver, WA

Evaluation Outcomes, Part 2

How frequently are participants using the *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments™* program?

According to respondents, the *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments™* program has considerable practical value and is easy to apply to many everyday situations and locations, with both children and adults. Its simplicity and portability allows for use in schools, homes, stores, clinics, hospitals, the outdoors, and a variety of other venues.

- **91%** of respondents reported using *The Calming Skill™* at least once in the last week
- **61%** of respondents reported sharing program information with parents in the last week



"I have been using the program constantly in my work. I work with kids who have experienced domestic violence, and the program works beautifully with my curriculum. I use it as a teaching tool throughout my program, but especially during the anger management and conflict resolution skills-building sections."

—Kellie Rogers, Children's Advocate, Children's Domestic Violence Program, YWCA, Renton, WA

"The Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments program reinforced skills that I use every day in my practice as a public health nurse. I use these skills on a daily basis at work in my clinic and my practice in the community (i.e., home visits). As a bonus, these skills are very effective at home with teenagers as well as with younger children."

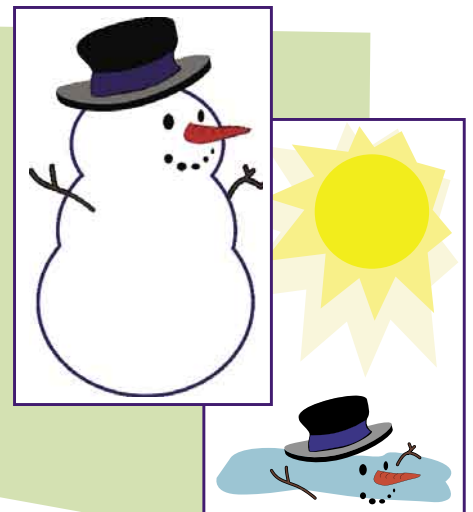
—Kelly Anderson, RN, BSN, Public Health Nurse, Northeast Tri County Health District, Colville, WA

"In our preschool program, we have trained both parents and children to use calming breaths before problem solving. Our teacher uses different calming activities to prepare children for stories. Above all, everyone is learning that problem solving, no matter how great or small, is not effective unless one is calm."

—Les Foss, Director/Parent Educator, Everett Community College, Everett, WA

"Eight-year-old Mimi carries a lot of stress and has trouble going to sleep. Now at bedtime, she uses the Melting Snowman calming technique, and is able to go to sleep soon after going to bed. She's getting more sleep, is more willing to go to bed, and her mom has more late evenings left for herself."

—Lanie Riley, Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Massage Therapist, Seattle, WA



"Your techniques come in very handy. We try to keep the big cards handy for those meltdown moments, and to remind ourselves what other methods we can try with our kids. We love the program!"

—Becky Blake, Special Education Instructional Assistant, Seattle Public Schools, Seattle, WA

"Children were not relaxing for rest time. They get up at 6 a.m. and were very tired and in need of rest. I taught them some relaxation methods and they were able to relax, therefore falling asleep for much-needed naps."

—Deborah K. Hayford, In-Home Child Care Provider, Vancouver, WA

"In a multi-age Camp Fire USA club, the leader noticed one young boy was becoming agitated. She recalled the steps for managing stress and immediately asked all the children to take a deep breath. All the kids loved the breathing break. It calmed the young boy who sparked the activity, and the rest of the meeting went great. The leader said they didn't do all the steps, but the boy was aware that he was less agitated."

—Donna S. Fischer, Club Program & Training Specialist, Camp Fire USA Snohomish County Council, Everett, WA



"I shared that it is easier to calm yourself when you are singing. So we sang the song from class and it was like letting the air out of a balloon. It calmed everyone in the room. I also used the calming music CDs to start class and if I forgot, the students would say 'Where's the music?'"

—Linda Starkenburg, Instructor, Renton Technical College, Renton, WA

Evaluation Outcomes, Part 3

How successful is the *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments*™ program in reducing stress among children and/or adults?

According to respondents, the *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments*™ program has been highly successful in reducing stress among a variety of children and adults in a range of situations. The resulting calming effect soothes both adult and child, creating a dual benefit.

- **87%** of respondents rated the *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments* program as highly effective or effective for calming themselves
- **94%** of respondents rated the *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments* program as highly effective or effective for calming children



"One day, we were grocery shopping and my son was beginning to lose it—so we stopped what we were doing and began shaking like puppies! Pretty soon, we were laughing too hard to be mad, and I have to say we received a few chuckles from other shoppers. One mom came up afterwards and asked me what we were doing, and said that she was going to use that tool with her toddlers."

—Kellie Rogers, Children's Advocate, Children's Domestic Violence Program, YWCA, Renton, WA

"One day my little granddaughter came over to visit during child care hours, and she really 'busied' things up. She spilled her milk, and then rocked back in her chair and fell backwards, so lunch went everywhere, and she was crying. The rest of the lunch carnage was still on the table. I was feeling stressed, and the only thing I could think to do was shake like a puppy. It did help."

—Jeni Meissner, In-Home Family Child Care Provider, Lynnwood, WA

"I used the calming skills with my husband as he lived his final weeks with cancer, when he was scared and in pain. I also shared the information with hospice and they were happy to hear some new calming techniques."

—Sherie Schmitt, Child Care Provider, Bothell, WA



“The program’s ability to teach stress management skills that enhance health and well-being has had far-reaching impact on children, families, and early childhood educators. Thanks to C.H.E.F. and its partners, the value of the Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments program will be felt for a lifetime.”

—Sue Anderson, Children & Their Families Programs Director, C.H.E.F.

C.H.E.F.® Helps Children and Adults Manage Stress Effectively

At C.H.E.F.®, we’re committed to improving the health of people of all ages through educational programs and services that can help change unhealthy behaviors. The *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments*™ program helps children, families, child care providers, and teachers ease their stress in positive and healthy ways. With early childhood professionals and family members working together on this unique educational program, children will learn positive stress management skills to use throughout their lives.

We are grateful to our generous partners, including the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, former Division of Child Care and Early Learning (DCCEL), for supporting statewide trainings of the *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments* program.

To Learn More

Our *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments* web page features product details, a research list, sample pages, testimonials, and more. Please visit www.chef.org/calming.

For additional information on the *Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments* program, please contact us at 800-323-2433 or cs@chef.org.



About C.H.E.F.®



Founded in 1974, Seattle-based Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (C.H.E.F.®) is dedicated to promoting health and quality of life through education. As a nationally known nonprofit organization, C.H.E.F. develops a variety of health promotion and prevention education programs and services for individuals and organizations working in the early childhood, school-aged youth, and healthy aging fields.

For information about C.H.E.F.'s programs and services, please visit www.chef.org or contact us at 800-323-2433 or cs@chef.org.



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