



HEADS IN, HEARTS IN

Calming Jar Instructions for Set-Up

Supplies

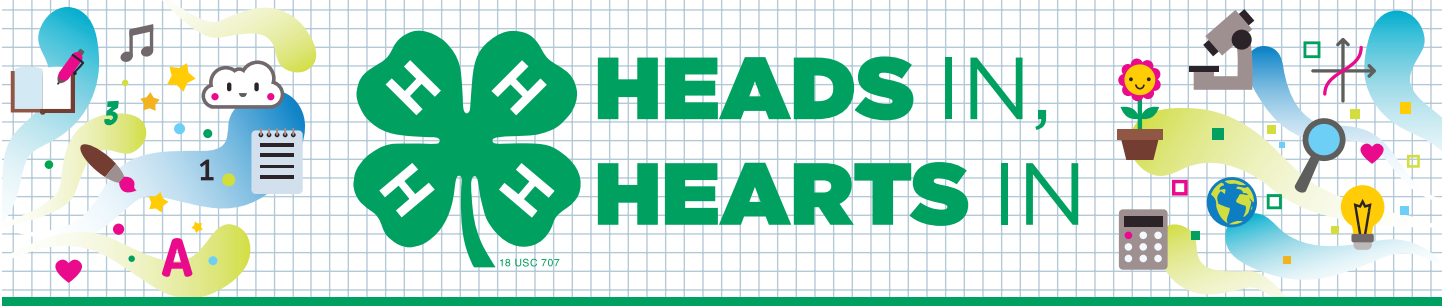
- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- Clear plastic container such as a water bottle, pop bottle, juice bottle or mason jar with a top
- Warm water
- Liquid food coloring
- Clear tacky glue (3 ounces)
- Glitter glue (3 ounces)
- Glitter (ultrafine if possible)
- 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.



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>. It also is in the “Family Engagement” section of *Heads In, Hearts In*.



Calming Jar

Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Mindfulness is the practice of slowing down and paying attention to the present moment. It is not emptying your brain of all thoughts. It is a process of focusing your energy and thinking on what is happening right now instead of what has happened in the past or might happen in the future. Mindfulness is noticing and paying attention without having to label or judge. During mindfulness practice, notice without placing judgment. For example, think to yourself, “I notice that I am feeling anxious,” rather than, “I notice I am feeling anxious. I am so weak.”

Mindfulness may include breathing techniques, stretching or movement, creative expression, meditation or some other practice that allows you to slow down your thinking, lessen distractions and focus your energy and attention for some time. Growing a mindfulness practice can help you improve your focus and attention, manage and address stress, learn to handle strong emotions and feel calm.

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.**