Haywood Grove School
Proud to be Special - Proud to be Different

Appendix C Just Right State Themes – Foods and Physical Activities

The Just Right State programme looks at the use of sensory activities and foods, to help children learn how to self-regulate their emotional states and behaviour.

The goal of the programme is to help children become more emotionally aware of themselves and others, to give them simple tools to enable them to self-regulate and achieve the just right state, whether it is to engage in academic learning, interact with siblings and peers or to be able to get a good night's sleep.

Teaching children self-regulation skills is a huge part of the work we do at Haywood Grove, and so whilst the children are learning at home, we would like them to be able to continue developing their understanding of the regulating properties of foods and physical activities.

Foods and physical activity can be upregulating (waking someone up) or downregulating (settling someone down from a heightened state). Using foods and physical activity to support regulation enables people to feel relaxed, energised and attentive. This means someone feels calm and alert, which is the optimum state for engaging in learning.

The timetable encourages "Chat" between the child and parent, carer, sibling, grandparent (through Skype etc). At school the "chat" would be themed around the Scared Gang characters. Your children will be familiar with these characters and many of our children identify strongly with one or more of the character, because they each have a different response to feeling anxious (fight, flight, freeze). The "chat" in school focusses on what helps each character return to feeling in just the right state when there has been a problem. Children are given the opportunity to problem solve and discuss what helped the character and what might help them. The focus is on:

- regulation strategies
- what is right for them as an individual
- what has gone right i.e. what you see them use to self-regulate

We know that you do not have access to these books, so whilst at home we are encouraging families to theme their "chat" around books they are reading, however if you do wish to "chat" with your child about self- regulation and how they manage situations they find tricky, this would be a helpful way of mirroring some of the work we do at school. You will know the types of scenarios your child finds most difficult and you may wish to theme your "chats" on these scenarios, however to get you started here are some typically tricky areas that you may want to explore and "chat" with your child about.

Chat general:
Discuss different ways to manage a difficult situation to get to the just right feeling. It's about learning how to stay in control when a situation is Tricky. Talk about times when self-regulation is difficult and what you can do to help yourself feel just right. For example you could talk about;

- Falling out with a friend
- Not getting to watch your choice of TV show
- Taking turns and listening in class
- Doing a quiet activity without feeling fidgety
- Doing work at home
- Going to sleep at night

The following foods and activities can be used at any time, however we have timetabled a learning break and snack slot and a snack and chat slot each day. If you wish to include the Just Right State themes in your day, you can pick one theme per day and include one physical activity and one snack in each session. There is no set order to complete them and you can re-visit them at any time.

Theme 1: COMFORT

Finding comfort from what we eat, touch, listen to and how we move

PICK ONE Comfort Snack: salt / sweet / warm /spice / warm drinks	
• chocolate	• Bread and jam
• Iced cinnamon buns	• Thick shakes/smoothies with a straw
• Warm drink: milk/ nutmeg/hot chocolate	• Sucking
• Ginger Oat Biscuits (lower sugar)	• Carbohydrates and salt and fat: pizza/ pasta/chips

Comfort Chat and Physical Activities PICK ONE: What do we like/seek? What do they like/seek already? This week thinking about what makes us feel comfortable.

Touch: deep pressure and warmth

- Hot water bottle
- Warm soft blanket/ duvet
- Massage
- Hugging teddy
- Stroking pet
- How we sit:
  - snuggled in to sofa
  - head on floor and legs up wall

Movement

- Bobbing gently on exercise ball or other bouncy surface e.g. sofa
- Rocking over ball on tummy
- Swinging to and fro
- Jumping on trampoline
- Leaning into exercise ball or other soft surface

Sound

- Listening to Music
- singing
- Soft voice

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY Draw what helps you find comfort (the whole family can join in)

Theme 2: STAYING ALERT:

Thinking about what we eat, touch, listen to and how we move helps us stay alert and pay attention.

PICK ONE Alert Snack/smell: orange/lemon/mint/cold drinks/ice	
• orange juice	• lemon soap
• Oranges (or other citrus fruit)	• Eucalyptus e.g. smell of vic vapour rub
• Mint sweets	• Mint chewing gum
• Ice cubes	•

Alert Chat and Physical Activity PICK ONE: What do we like/seek? What do they like/seek already to feel alert and help us pay attention

Touch: brisk, light, tickle

- Tickle with feather
- Silky scarf
- Loofah
- Tickle own face

Movement

- Fast jerky unsteady movements
- Shake out arms and legs
- Jump up and down
- Spinning games (careful!)
- Sit on an exercise ball and move in different directions

Sound

- Fast music with changing rhythm

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY Draw what helps you stay alert and pay attention.

Theme 3: Strong and Confident

This theme looks at what we do to help us feel strong and confident. We need to be able to say what we want to, and to listen to people we care about.

- Sometimes we can feel too angry or too shy, and that stops us from saying.
- We need to feel 'just right' so we can be strong and confident and say what we need to.

Food to help you feel strong instead of cross:	
• crunching ice	• crunching ice pop
• Crunching apples or other crunchy fruit	• Sucking thick milkshake
• Chewy mango or other chewy dried fruit	• Chewy curly wurly or other chewy sweet

Strong and confident Chat:

- Some people find it hard to say, and end up doing what others want instead (compliant).
- Other people get really cross and angry (aggressive).

Being strong and confident is being able to say, without feeling too shy or getting too cross.

Touch:

- Firm touch to self when cross
- Hand squeezes
- interlocking fingers, push out
- chair push ups (sit on chair and lift own weight off chair with hands pushing on seat)

Movement

- Cross:
  - climbing or hanging down
  - rolling / flexion (bending limbs) / traction (stretching)
- shy:
  - cycling down a hill fast
  - spinning on a swing/spinning games

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY Draw what helps you to feel strong and confident.

Theme 4: Cross/ Can't sit still

This theme looks at what helps us when we are cross or can't sit still.
Looking at what food, things to touch, what movement or music helps us to feel just right when we feel irritated/ annoyed.

Feeling Cross Foods to calm: Bite/ crunch PICK ONE	
• crisps	• crunchy fruit/ vegetables
• cereals	•
• biscuits	•
• Nuts (as long as no-one has allergies in the home)	•

Feeling Cross Chat and Physical Activity PICK ONE: What helps to calm? What do they like/seek already?

Touch:

- Pushing into small spaces
- Pulling lycra round body
- Squidge with exercise ball or large cushion
-

Movement

- climb/ climbing bars

T**Sound**

- Listening to favourite Music with steady beat
- Moving to the beat of music
- Soft voice

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: Draw what helps you to feel just right when you are cross/annoyed.

Theme 5: Anger

This theme looks at how to feel just right again when we are really angry.

Feeling angry foods to calm: chew PICK ONE	
• Chewy French stick	• Chicken strips or other chewy meat
• toast	• dried mango strips or other dried fruit
• Chewy sausage / dried meat	• Curly wurly or other chewy sweets

Feeling angry things to calm Chat and Physical Activity PICK ONE: What helps us to feel just right? What do they like/seek already?

Touch:

- Squeezing into tight spaces
- Pulling lycra blanket round body
-

Movement

- **hanging**
- **pulling**
- **lifting**
- **digging**

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY Draw what helps when you feel angry

Theme 6: Shut out

Sometimes everything is all too much and we have to shut everything out or just need to drift off into a daydream. This theme thinks about what helps us to feel just right when we feel like that.

Shut out foods: spice PICK ONE	
• Peperami sausage	• Wasabi peas
• Sweet chilli crisps	• curry
○ Salsa dip	• Anything spicy

Shut out times Physical Activity PICK ONE What do we like/seek? What do they like/seek already?

Touch: deep pressure and warmth

- Very hot water bottle
- Hot bath

Look:

- Favourite tv show
- Play station
- Favourite jigsaw

Movement

- Rocking on your tummy to a song
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OPTIONAL ACTIVITY Draw what helps when you need to shut out.