

A Big little Learners & Children's Museum of Wilmington Activity



Squeezing a stress ball gives our bodies deep pressure input that can help us feel calmer, more focused, and ready to learn!

Did you know?

When children squeeze, they are also building the hand strength they need for writing, cutting, buttoning, and so much more!

Pick a feeling

How are you feeling today?



Happy



Sad



Angry



Calm

Squeeze & Count

Choose a stress ball and squeeze it slowly



- Try 5 slow squeezes
- Try 10 strong squeezes
- Squeeze while taking a deep breath in and out

Talk about it

Use these conversation starters to connect

How does your body feel right now?

What happened that made you feel that way?

Does squeezing help your body feel different?

What else helps you feel calm?

Growing through play

While squeezing, you child is building:



Helps calm BIG feelings and builds coping strategies



Strengthens hand muscles for everyday tasks and play.







Encourages talking about feelings and expressing needs.



Helps children notice how their body feels.

Take it Home

Keep a stress ball in:

-  The car
-  A backpack
-  A calm down corner
-  A classroom desk

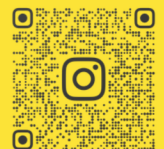


Remember: Stress balls aren't just toys, they're tools that can help children learn about feelings & practice calming strategies

We are two therapist moms passionate about helping children communicate and regulate through play.

Play with purpose. Grow with confidence.

Want more ideas for calm, connection, and communication?



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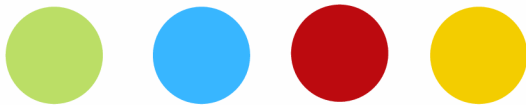
Materials:

- Balloon
- Funnel
- Dry rice, lentils, or beans



Directions:

1. Help your child pick a balloon color based on how they are feeling

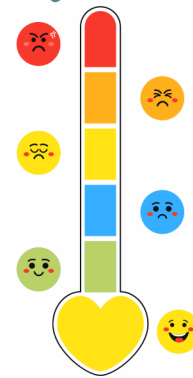


Green Blue Red Yellow

2. Stretch the balloon a few times.
3. Use a funnel to fill the balloon with rice, lentils or beans
4. Tie securely.
5. For extra durability, place inside a second balloon.



Pick your Balloon 🎈 color based on your emotion



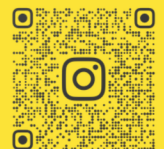
Squeeze & Breathe

1. Squeeze the stress ball tight for 3 seconds.
2. Slowly release.
3. Take a deep breath in through your nose as if you're smelling a flower 🌻
4. Blow out like you're blowing out birthday 🎂 candles
5. Repeat 5 times.

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Simple ways to take calm deep breaths

Bubble Breathing



- Take a deep breath in through your nose
- Blow out slowly through your mouth like you're making ONE big bubble
- Try to make your exhale long and steady (no popping the bubble!)

Say: "Slow breath... big bubble... slow pop!"

Feather Breathing



Keep the feather floating!

- Place a feather in your hand or on a table
- Inhale slowly through your nose
- Exhale gently to keep the feather floating or moving softly
- The goal is a soft, steady breath

Say: "Gentle breath... don't drop the feather!"

Balloon Belly Breathing



Fill your belly like a balloon!

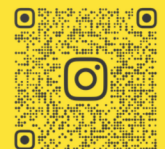
- Have the child place hands on their belly
- Breathe in through the nose → belly grows like a balloon
- Breathe out through the mouth → balloon gets small
- You can use a real balloon or draw one for visual support

Say: "Belly up... belly down..."

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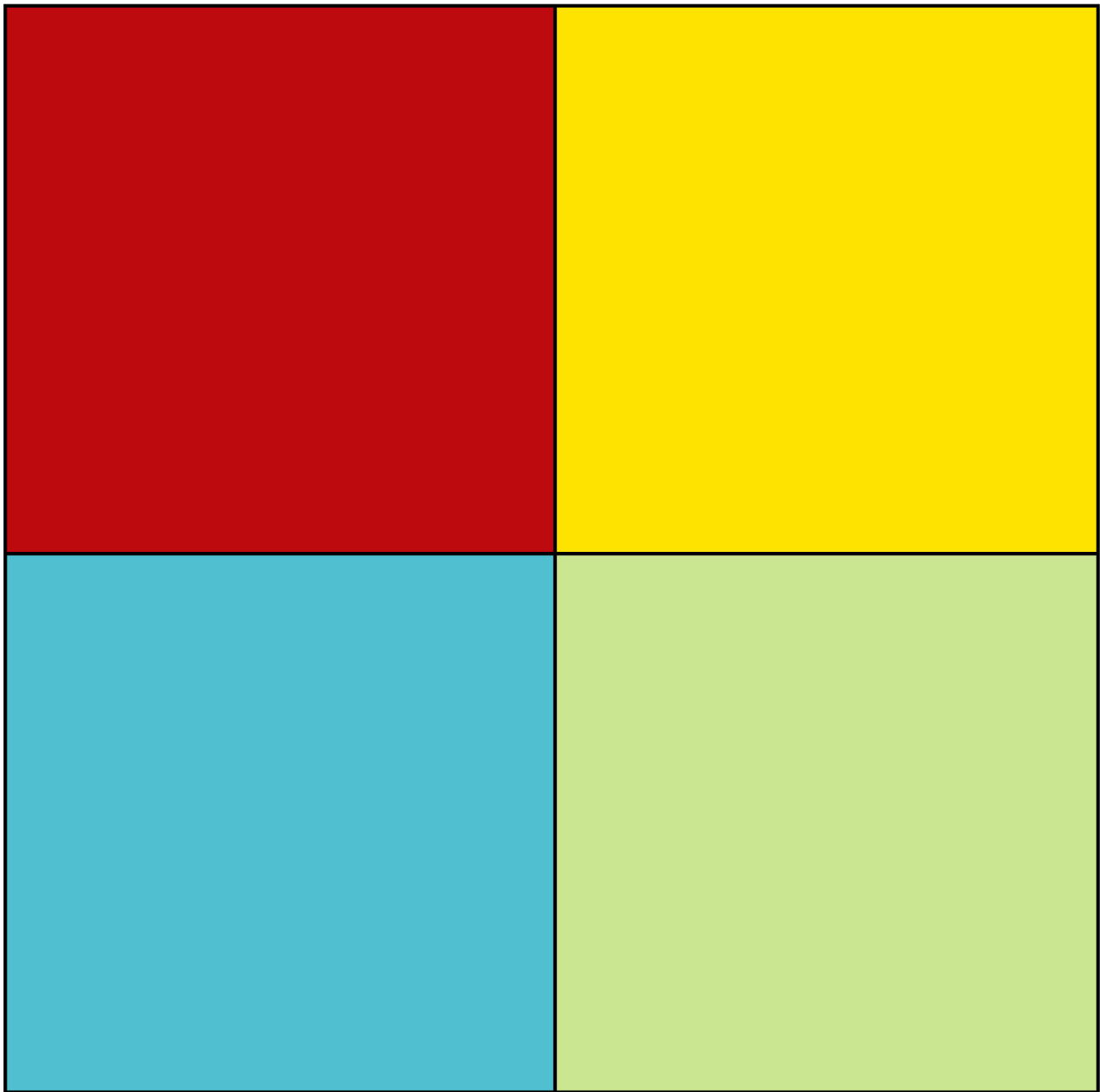


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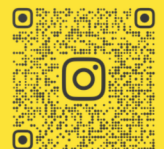
Place the emotions on the corresponding color



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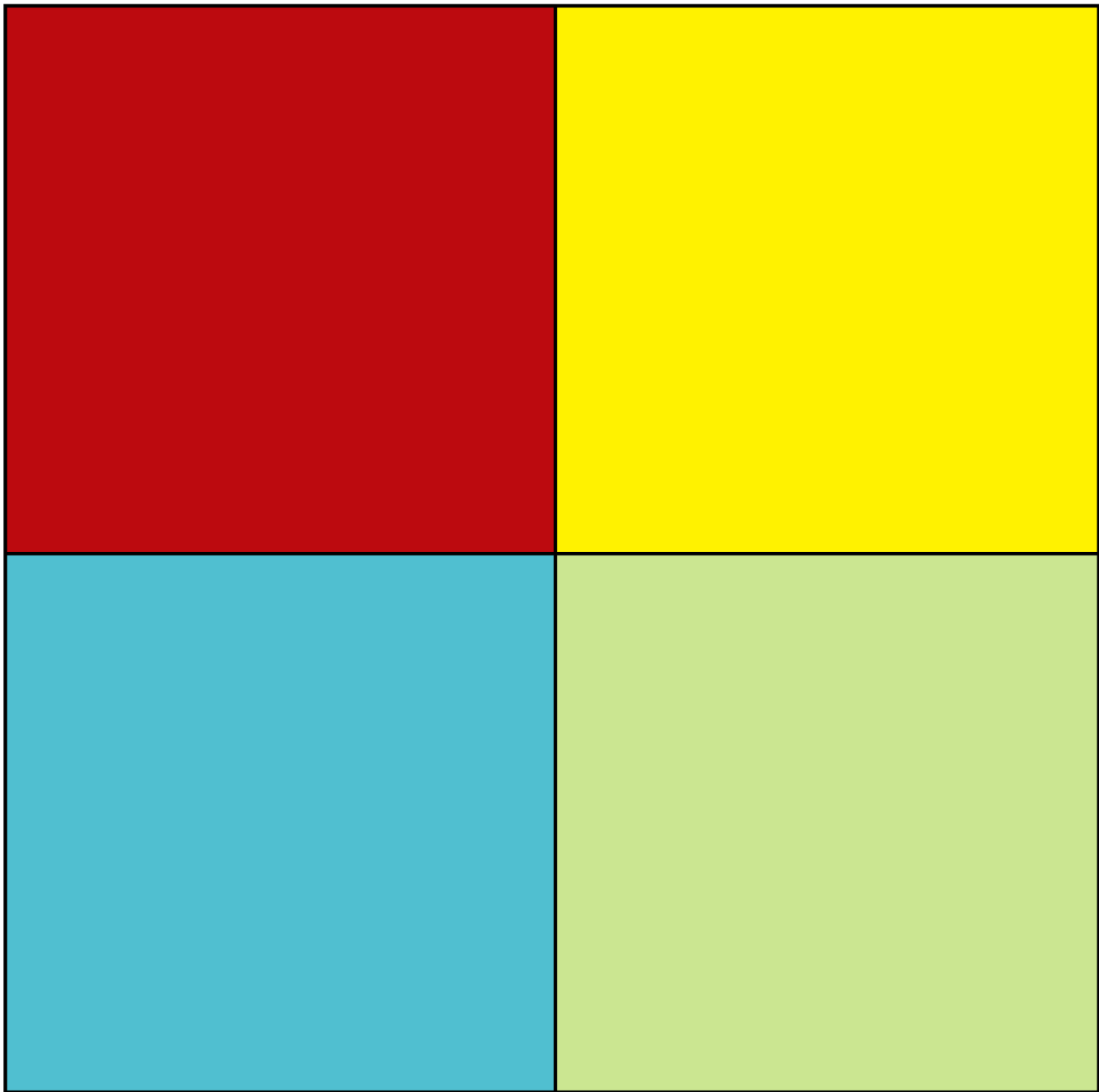


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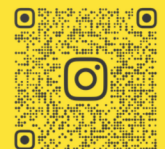
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Instructions Cut out the pictures below and place on corresponding color

 Loved	 Sad	 Happy
 Worried	 Silly	 Chill
 Annoyed	 Disgusted	 Scared
 Embarrassed	 Excited	 Frustrated

Instructions Cut out the pictures below and place on corresponding color

 Mad	 Calm	 Tired
 Surprised	 Afraid	 Proud
 Overwhelmed	 Curious	 Furious
 Shocked	 Heart broken	 Disappointed