

Arousal Levels

Arousal levels refer to how awake, alert, and energised you feel.

Arousal Levels

High
arousal

Calm /
Alert

Low
arousal

Our arousal levels need to change to match out activities.

HIGH AROUSAL

- Needed for doing PE and gross motor games
- When we are anxious, worried or overwhelmed
- When overexcited



CALM / ALERT

- Sitting in class learning
- Library / reading books
- Learning something new
- To be able to communicate effectively



LOW AROUSAL

- Needed before bed to be able to sleep
- When we are ill
- Needed to recover from a high arousal state



How can we change our arousal levels?

The current environment	Food	Change of activity
Change in heart rate (up or down)	Temperature (too hot or cold, use a fan to heat or cool)	Light's (brightness up/down, flashing on/off)
Social environment (leave or go to other people)	Drink (hot /cold, thin thick, sweet, creamy)	Motivation and Interest
Sleep / Rest	Feeling safe	Noise levels



How to change arousal levels



CHANGING LOW AROUSAL TO CALM/ALERT

To increase alertness and help 'wake up' a child's nervous system, consider activities, the environment, and food and drink.

Environment

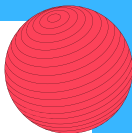
- Ensure the room is well-ventilated by opening a window, using a fan, or adjusting air conditioning. A warm room can increase drowsiness and sleepiness.
- Play upbeat music to boost energy and engagement.
- Increase lighting, as brightness helps with alertness. Colour-changing lights can also enhance stimulation.
- Consider seating options—if the child is too comfortable, they may become drowsy.
- Introduce stimulating scents like citrus or mint, which can help awaken the senses.



Activities

Think increased movement—stand up and get active!

- Spinning
- Stop/Start Movements
- Jumping Up and Down
- Obstacle Course
- Tug of War
- Dancing
- Jumping and crashing
- Blowing bubbles
- Hopping
- Running
- Clapping games
- Animal walks
- Finding items in ball pool
- Climbing



Food / Drink

- Is the child hungry or lacking energy due to insufficient food?
- Having a cold drink can increase alertness, use a straw.
- Offer mints (checking for allergies) or chewing gum during lessons.
- Snacks such as whole raw carrots, dried mango, or frozen Frubes and ice to chew on throughout the school day can help (ensure any allergies are considered).



How to change arousal levels



CHANGING HIGH AROUSAL TO CALM/ALERT

To reduce energy levels and help 'calm down' a child's nervous system, consider activities, the environment, and food and drink.

Environment

- Ensure the room is warm and free from drafts.
- Play calm, slow, and quiet music to help bring energy levels down.
- Reducing harsh or bright lighting can help create a calmer environment.
- Consider the voices and movements in the room; use slow movements and soft, quiet voices.
- Introducing calming scents, like vanilla or lavender, can help promote relaxation.
- Reduce demands to lower any anxiety the child may have.



Activities

- Deep pressure massage (therapy ball over back)
- Obstacle Course
- Jumping and crashing
- Chewies
- Heavy work activities
- Chair push ups
- Theraputty
- Deep breathing exercises
- Yoga poses
- Sensory bottle
- Fidget tools
- Swinging
- Resistant work
- Hand massage
- Muscle squeezing
- Cuddling a soft blanket
- Holding a weighted toy



Food / Drink

- Having a thick drink (yogurt or smoothie) through a thin straw uses lots of heavy work for the jaw and helps to regulate our nervous system.
- Offer chewing gum or a toffee during lessons.
- Snacks such as whole raw carrots, dried mango, or frozen Frubes and ice to chew on throughout the school day can help (ensure any allergies are considered).

