



CURRICULUM CORNER
Hum Your Way to A Calmer December
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This time of year can be hectic and overwhelming -- both for little kids & their grown-ups -- so having a couple of calming tricks up your sleeve can go a long way to making the season better. Throughout the day in our classrooms, our teachers incorporate calming, multi-sensory self-regulation strategies. We can promote successful soothing using playful actions like pouring water back and forth, folding and tearing paper, or rocking side to side to a favorite song. One brain-based approach to calming down that is free, easy, and can be done anywhere is to stimulate the vagus nerve.

The vagus nerve is the longest nerve in the body and it connects your brain to several organs. It's part of the parasympathetic nervous system that affects your breathing, digestion, and heart rate. By stimulating your vagus nerve you can help shift yourself into "relax mode" and activate your system's "rest and digest" response. This is one reason why taking slow, deep breaths can help you calm down but, as explained in [this](#) article, there are many other fun and easy ways to get the same effect. So the next time you and your child are waiting in a long line at the store, are stuck in holiday traffic, or are getting a little grouchy at a big family gathering, try bending backward, humming, or gargling!