

CalmCubs

Meet the Cast

Illustrated chapter books from across the Spark & Anvil portfolio.

Copyright & License

© 2026 Spark & Anvil (501(c)(3) public charity). Chapter text and illustrations licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. App software © Spark & Anvil — all rights reserved. Distribute, adapt, and remix freely for educational use with attribution.

This book collects 4 chapter books from the CalmCubs cast — each character embodies a different curricular primitive; together they teach the full subject.

Methodology: distributed-narrative learning per Bruner narrative-cognition + Habgood intrinsic-integration + SAMHSA TIP 57 trauma-informed register.

Spark & Anvil is a 501(c)(3) public charity. All apps free forever; no ads; no tracking; no in-app purchases.

spark-and-anvil.com

For everyone who learns by hearing a story first.

Contents

CalmCubs

- [Meet the Cast](#)
- [Copyright & License](#)
- [Contents](#)
- [Introduction](#)

Cozy

Breeze

Squish

Mellow

- [About Spark & Anvil](#)
- [More chapter books from Spark & Anvil](#)
- [Methodology](#)
- [License](#)

Introduction

The CalmCubs cast was authored to embody the curriculum, not decorate around it. Each of the 4 characters you'll meet in this book teaches a specific primitive — a particular tactic, a particular technique, a particular way of seeing. Together they form an ensemble: the cast IS the curriculum.

Read in any order. Each chapter stands alone.

Each character also appears in the matching Spark & Anvil app (free, forever) where you can practice what they teach.

— *The editors at Spark & Anvil*

Cozy

Noticing a big feeling and choosing a coping tool: breathe, squeeze-and-let-go, or pause



Cozy is a soft bear cub who carries a little toolbox — but not for hammers and nails. Cozy's toolbox is full of *calm-down tools*. There's slow breathing, like smelling a flower and blowing out a candle. There's squeeze-and-let-go, tight then floppy. And there's pause-and-count, stop and go slow. When a feeling gets big, Cozy doesn't get rid of it — Cozy reaches for a tool.



Cozy's friend Nib the rabbit built a tall block tower, and — *crash* — it tumbled down. A hot, fizzy, grabby feeling rushes up in Nib, all the way to the tips of Nib's ears. Nib's paws ball up. Nib wants to throw the blocks across the room. The big feeling feels like it's driving, and Nib is just holding on.



"I know that fizzy feeling," says Cozy gently, sitting down beside Nib. "Big feelings are okay — they're allowed. And you don't have to do what the fizzy feeling says. You get to pick a tool. First we just *name* it: 'I feel really frustrated.' Then we choose. Want to try pause-and-count with me? We stop... and we count down slow. Five... four..."



Nib stops. "Five," says Nib shakily. "Four... three... two... one." Nib takes one slow breath. The fizzy feeling is still there — but smaller now, and Nib is the one holding it, instead of the other way around. "It's still a little fizzy," Nib says. "That's okay," says Cozy. "You don't have to feel perfect. You just gave yourself a moment. That was brave."



Nib picks up one block, then another, calm enough now to choose what to do next. "And if a feeling ever gets so big that no tool is helping," Cozy adds softly, "that's when we go find a grown-up we trust. That's a strong thing to do, not a small one." Nib nods and leans against Cozy's warm side. The tower can be rebuilt. And now Nib knows: a big feeling always passes, and there's always a tool — and always someone — to help.

Breeze

Slow, deep breathing settles a jumpy, worried body



Breeze is a sloth who does everything slowly — and most slowly of all, Breeze *breathes*. In through the nose, soft and deep, like smelling a flower... and out through the mouth, long and gentle, like blowing a dandelion. "When a feeling gets fast and jumpy," Breeze says in a calm, unhurried voice, "you can breathe slow, and your body follows. Slow breath, slow heart, slow calm."



Breeze's friend Tio the chipmunk is waiting for his very first turn at the storytelling circle, and his heart is *racing*. His paws are jittery, his tummy is fluttery, and his breath is coming quick and shallow. "I feel all fast and buzzy inside," Tio whispers. "Like I might just... zoom away." The nervous feeling has taken the wheel.



"Let's slow it down together," says Breeze, settling beside Tio. "Put a paw on your tummy. Now breathe in slow — smell the flower — and feel your tummy fill up like a little balloon... good. Now breathe out long — blow the dandelion — and feel it go down. Again. In, slow... out, slow." Tio breathes along, matching Breeze's gentle rhythm.



Little by little, the buzzing eases. Tio's paws stop jittering. The fast, fluttery feeling doesn't vanish — but it slows, and softens, and Tio feels steady enough to stand. "My heart isn't racing anymore," Tio says, surprised. "I just... breathed, and my body listened." The nervousness is still there, but it's small now, and Tio is calm enough to carry it.



Tio takes one more slow breath and steps up to tell his story, calm and ready. And whenever the buzzy feeling comes back, Tio knows the secret now: slow breath, slow calm. A soft, settled, steady feeling fills him up, gentle as Breeze itself. And Breeze, in no hurry at all, gives a slow, proud, sleepy smile.

Squish

Squeezing your muscles tight and then letting them go loosens a tight, tense feeling



Squish is a friendly octopus with eight soft arms, and Squish has a favorite way to feel calm: squeeze, then let go. Squish curls all eight arms up tight — tighter, tighter — holds for a moment... and then *whoosh*, lets them flop loose and floppy. "When a feeling makes you all tight and clenched," Squish says, "you squeeze on purpose, then let go, and the tightness goes with it."



Squish's friend Bram the badger is trying so hard not to cry that his whole body has gone stiff. His fists are balled, his shoulders are up by his ears, his jaw is clenched tight. "I'm all... *tight*," Bram says through gritted teeth. "Everything's squeezed up and it won't let go." Holding the feeling in has turned Bram to stone.



"Then let's squeeze on purpose first," says Squish gently. "Make your fists as tight as you can — tighter — hold it... and now let them flop, all floppy and loose. Feel that? Now your shoulders — scrunch them up to your ears — hold... and *drop* them down. And your face — scrunch it small — hold... and let it go soft." Bram squeezes and releases, part by part.



With each squeeze-and-release, a little of the stiffness melts away. Bram's fists uncurl. His shoulders come down. His jaw goes soft. The tight, stony feeling loosens and drains right out of him. "I feel... floppy," Bram says, and a wobbly little laugh slips out. "Like a noodle." The feeling that was locked up tight has finally let go.



Bram wiggles his loose, floppy arms and feels the last of the tightness leave. He didn't have to force the feeling away — he just squeezed, and let it go. A warm, loose, unclenched relief settles all through him. And Squish, all eight arms drifting soft and easy, gives Bram a gentle, floppy hug.

Mellow

Pausing and counting down gives a big rush a moment to settle before you do anything



Mellow is a koala who is never, ever in a rush. When a big feeling comes rushing up — even a happy, excited one — Mellow does the same calm thing every time: stops, and counts down slow. "Five... four... three... two... one." "A rush wants you to go *fast*," Mellow says in a soft, easy voice. "But if you pause and count first, the rush settles, and *then* you get to choose."



Mellow's friend Jax the squirrel is so excited about the pond party that he can barely stand still. He grabs the whole tray of berry cups to carry them all at once — zoom! — trips over his own feet, and berries fly everywhere. "Awww, no!" Jax wails. The excited rush made him go too fast, and now it's a mess.



"That big excited feeling made you *zoom*," says Mellow gently, helping gather berries. "Excited feelings do that — they push you to hurry. But you can pause first. Next time the rush comes, try it with me: stop... and count down slow. Five... four... three... two... one. By the time you reach one, the zoom has softened, and you can go at a just-right speed."



Jax tries it. He feels the excited rush bubble up again — but this time he stops. "Five... four... three... two... one." The zoomy feeling eases into a warm, steady kind of excited. Now Jax carries the berry cups two at a time, careful and calm, and not a single one spills. "I still feel excited," Jax says, "but I'm not *zooming* anymore. I did it the way I wanted to!"



All through the party, whenever the rush comes, Jax pauses and counts, and does each thing at a just-right speed — pouring, sharing, playing — nothing spilled, nothing rushed. A calm, in-control, steady-and-happy feeling fills him up. And Mellow, munching a leaf in no hurry at all, gives a slow, sleepy, contented nod. There is always, always time for a moment.

About Spark & Anvil

Spark & Anvil is a 501(c)(3) public charity. We make educational apps for ages 9-14 — all free, forever; no ads; no tracking; no in-app purchases. CalmCubs is one of 140+ apps in the portfolio.

More chapter books from Spark & Anvil

Each app in the Spark & Anvil portfolio publishes its own illustrated chapter book + audio drama, available free from spark-and-anvil.com/books. Highlights include:

- **GambitTales** — chess tactics through Sir Pinwell, Lady Skewer, Queen Vesper, and the Twin Knights of Fork Hill
- **ProofQuest** — formal proof techniques through Direct-Proof Dora and the Lemma Library
- **CuriosityQuest** — Texas geography exploration through Linger, Notice, and the Lantern in the Dark
- **QuillSpell** — spelling craft through the Word Wizard cast
- **SynaForge** — sensory-affirming creative tools through Lull, Soften, and the Quiet that is Also Creating

Methodology

Distributed-narrative pedagogy per Jerome Bruner (narrative-cognition) + Sebastian Habgood (intrinsic-integration in educational games) + SAMHSA TIP 57 (trauma-informed register).

Trauma-informed-design framework per Eggleston et al. (2025) and Stoltenburg et al. (2024).

License

© 2026 Spark & Anvil (501(c)(3) public charity). Chapter text and illustrations licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. App software © Spark & Anvil — all rights reserved. Distribute, adapt, and remix freely for educational use with attribution.

Cover art, chapter illustrations, and chapter text are reviewed for age-appropriate, trauma-aware content before publication. Audio drama transcripts available at spark-and-anvil.com/cast.