

Relaxation Breathing for Young Children



Instructions

This relaxation tool can be used proactively, or it can be used to support children who are anxious, frustrated, sad, or overwhelmed. It can be used with individual children or with the whole class. The tool is designed to help children feel calmer through deep breathing and physical grounding. You can use this tool on its own or add the AllPlay Learn emotion cards to help children notice and name their feelings before and after the activity. Consider their emotional state and support regulation before talking about feelings.

Read this script to the child in a quiet, safe, and comfortable, low sensory environment. This script should be read at a slow and even pace with a gentle and relaxed tone.

Give children a choice in whether they would like to join in. Invite the child to hold a comforting object if they would like. Children can practice this exercise in any comfortable position, as long as at least one body part is touching a chair or the floor.

Below are two examples of how you might use this relaxation script. You can start by choosing the script that best suits the child/children you are supporting and adjusting it to their needs and setting. For example, depending on the child's position and developmental age, you might substitute:

- Body parts (e.g., feet, hands, legs, arms, face)
- Actions (e.g., squeeze, wiggle)
- Supports (e.g., the chair, the floor)

Script example 1

We can feel calm by breathing together.

You can sit, lie down, or stand up.

When you're ready to start, you can choose to close your eyes.

We are all OK here together.



Feel your body on the floor.



Wiggle your toes.

Keep going for 1...2...3 seconds.

And stop.



Wiggle your fingers.

Keep going for 1...2... 3 seconds.

And stop.



Wiggle your nose.

Keep going for 1...2...3 seconds.

And stop.



Put your hand on your tummy if you can.
Now breathe in slowly with your nose.
Pretend you're smelling a flower.

(Educator to mirror loud inhale noise)



Feel your tummy go up. Hold your breath.
Now breathe out slowly with your mouth,
like you're blowing lots of bubbles.

(Educator to mirror loud exhale, "whoosh" noise).



Feel your tummy go down.

Let's do this one more time.



Put your hand on your tummy.
Now breathe in slowly with your nose.
Pretend you're smelling a flower.

(Educator to mirror loud inhale noise)



Feel your tummy go up.
Hold. Now breathe out slowly with your
mouth, like you're blowing lots of bubbles.

(Educator to mirror loud exhale, "whoosh" noise).



Feel your tummy go down.
Breathe normally.
Feel your body on the floor.
Now you can open your eyes.
We may feel calmer and more relaxed.

Script example 2

We can feel calm by breathing together.

You can sit, lie down, or stand up.

When you're ready to start, you can choose to close your eyes.

We are all OK here together.



Feel your legs on the chair.



Squeeze your feet as tight as you can.
Hold for 1...2...3 seconds. And let go.



Squeeze your hands as tight as you can.
Hold for 1...2...3 seconds. And let go.



Squeeze your face as tight as you can.
Hold for 1...2...3 seconds. And let go.



Put one hand on your tummy (or think about your tummy).

Now breathe in slowly with your nose.

Pretend you're smelling a flower.

(Educator to mirror loud inhale noise)



Feel your tummy go up. Hold your breath.

Now breathe out slowly with your mouth, like you're blowing lots of bubbles.

(Educator to mirror loud exhale, "whoosh" noise).



Feel your tummy go down.

Let's do this one more time.



Put one hand on your tummy (or think about your tummy).

Now breathe in slowly with your nose.

Pretend you're smelling a flower.

(Educator to mirror loud inhale noise)



Feel your tummy go up. Hold.

Now breathe out slowly with your mouth, like you're blowing lots of bubbles.

(Educator to mirror loud exhale, "whoosh" noise).



Feel your tummy go down.

Breathe normally.

Feel your legs on the chair.

Now you can open your eyes.

We may feel calmer and more relaxed.