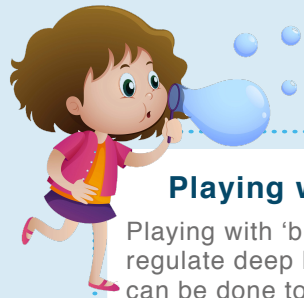


## Breathing Exercises to Help Children With Anxiety During COVID-19



### Playing with bubbles

Playing with 'bubbles' is a great way to help regulate deep breathing. It is also something that can be done together with an older child and/or an adult.

Take a big, tummy pushing out breath before gently and slowly blowing to make the bubbles - making sure the tummy is contracting. It's fun too!

### Imagination

Imagination - picture this.....

Breathe in ready to blow birthday candles out, count to 4, then breathe out like you are blowing out the birthday candles and count to 4.

Pretend your tummy is like a balloon. Breathe in and make the balloon bigger, then breathe out and make the balloon shrink.

Darth Vader Breathing - Pretend you have a straw in your mouth, suck in through the straw and breathe in. Breathe out like Darth Vader.

### Human Animal Bond

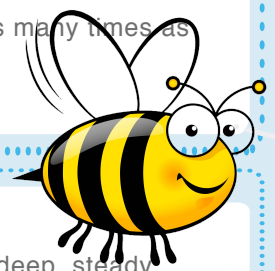
Getting your child to watch and copy the slow breathing of your family pet can be a great way to reduce their anxiety and become grounded.

Start by asking them to place a hand on their pet's side and focus on their slow breathing. Then placing a hand gently on their tummy, ask them to copy the animal's slow deep breathing. Once comfortable, ask the child to close their eyes and repeat five times.



### Bumble bee breathing

Breathe in through the nose. Exhale slowly and in a controlled manner while making a deep, steady humming sound like that of a bumble bee. The humming sound should be smooth, even and continuous for the duration of the exhalation.



### Drawing

Draw a shape, square, star, triangle etc

**SQUARE** - follow the sides of the square, breathing in for 4 counts on one side and out on the next side for 4 counts again. Continue round the square.

**STAR** - use your finger to follow the sides of the star. Breathe in. Hold your breath on the tip and breathe out on the other side. Continue until you have been all the way around the star

**TRIANGLE** - take a deep breath for 3 counts on side one. Hold your breath for 3 counts on the next side and finally out for 3 counts on the final side

Do these for a few minutes at a time.



### Hot chocolate breathing

Ask your child to imagine they are picking up a big mug of hot chocolate. Imagine the warmth of the drink in your hands - you can close your eyes if you like.

Now hold your drink up to your mouth but don't drink, just take a big smell of your hot chocolate. Breathe out slowly enjoying the smell of your hot chocolate.

Take several big deep smells of your drink and slowly breathe out as though you are cooling your drink.

When you are ready, imagine you are taking a sip: Is it cool enough to drink? Can you feel the warmth of the hot chocolate in your mouth? Can you feel it moving through your chest and down into your stomach?

You can repeat these steps as many times as you like..

