

ADVICE SHEET

Breathing Exercises for Children



Some of the benefits of deep breathing include:

- Reduced feelings of anxiety and overwhelm
- Lowered stress levels
- Relaxed muscles
- Increased energy levels

When to use breathing exercises:

Make these exercises fun and easy to remember when things feel topsy-turvy. The following breathing exercises use imagery that appeals to children, and language they will have no trouble understanding.

Remember that when you introduce these mindful breathing exercises to your children, be sure to do so when they are not overwhelmed or dysregulated. Instead, introduce these breathing exercises during calm moments when your child will be receptive to the information and willing to practice them along with you.

Some exercises to try:

Smelling Flowers

Tell your little one to imagine they are smelling a flower, breathing in deeply through the nose and out through the mouth. Smelling flowers is one of the easiest breathing exercises to master, and a good starting point for your child.



Canterbury District STLS & Outreach

The Bunny Breath

Just like a little bunny in the garden, encourage your child to take three quick sniffs in through the nose, and one long exhale out through the mouth.

Blow Out Candle (can link with smelling flowers see below)

Have your child blow out the candles on a make-believe birthday cake, drawing a deep breath in through the mouth, and blowing it out strong through the mouth as well.

The Snake Breath

Tell your child to pretend he/she is a snake and hiss, inhaling deeply through the nose and blowing out through the mouth with a soft and low hissing sound.

Blowing Bubbles

Remind your child how softly they need to blow to get a nice big bubble. Encourage them to take a deep breath in and blow it out soft and long.

Smell the Flower and Blow out The Candle

Have your child pretend that he/she has a flower in one hand and a candle in the other. The first step is smelling the flower, taking a deep breath in through the nose, and filling the lungs with air. Next, have your child exhale and blow out the candle in the other hand.

Bumble Bee Breath

Have your child sit comfortably and inhale through their nose, keeping their mouth closed. Next, with their mouth still closed, have them make a humming or buzzing noise (like a bumblebee) as they exhale. Your child can also cup their hands around their ears to amplify the buzzing sound.

Deep Belly Breath

Have your child place one hand on their belly and one hand on their chest. Let them take a deep breath in for four counts and then exhale slowly (through their nose) for four counts. Remind them to pay attention to the rise and fall of their chest and belly as they complete the exercise.

Tumble Dryer

Have your child sit cross-legged and get comfortable. Have them point their index fingers toward each other in front of their mouth. After your child inhales deeply through the nose, have them exhale through their mouth and swirl their fingers around as they do so (like a tumble dryer). The fun part of this is the swishy noise they'll hear as they exhale.

Dragon Fire Breaths

Have your child interlace their fingers under their chin, and as they inhale, have them raise their elbows as high as they can around their neck and face. On the exhale, have them lower their elbows back down.

Hot Air Balloon Breath

For the hot air balloon breath, have your child sit comfortably and cup their hands around their mouth. Have them inhale deeply, and on the exhale (through their mouth), prompt them to expand their hands outward, as if they are blowing up a giant hot air balloon.

Shoulder Roll Breath

Shoulder roll breaths are a great breathing exercise for kids. They have the added benefit of releasing tight muscles and tension. Have your child sit comfortably. As they take a deep breath in, encourage them to roll their shoulders up toward their ears. Have them drop their shoulders back down on the exhale.

When teaching the strategy remember the following:

- **Get down to their level**

Getting down to your child's eye level signals to them they have your full attention. When you get down to your child's level, make eye contact, and speak softly. Your message is more likely to be heard and received.

- **Find a quiet space**

If a meltdown happens in the middle of a busy spacey, the stimulation from your child's surroundings won't be conducive to returning them to a state of calm. Do your best to remove your child from the situation. Find a quiet space to talk to your child and do some mindful breathing

Take deep breath



