

MINDFUL PRACTICES FOR CHILDREN

DAILY MINDFULNESS MOMENTS CAN REDUCE STRESS AND ANXIETY AND HELP KIDS MANAGE THEIR BEHAVIOR

Start each of these fun, kid-friendly, bite-sized breathing exercises by sitting or standing tall with good posture and taking a deep breath in and out.

- ✚ **Candle Breath:** Imagine you are holding a candle close to you. Take a long deep breath in through your nose, and then exhale through your mouth just enough to make the flame wiggle. After five deep breaths, blow out the candle and open your eyes.
- ✚ **Flower Breath:** Close your eyes and imagine a beautiful flower. Bring it up close to you and smell the flower with five deep breaths in and out.
- ✚ **Hibernating Bear:** Imagine you are a big bear, hibernating relaxed and warm in your bear cave. Take five super slow deep breaths, breathing both in and out through your nose.
- ✚ **Cup of Hot Chocolate:** Imagine your hot chocolate is too hot to drink. Take five long breaths in and gently blow to cool it off. Then imagine sipping your chocolate and then exhaling with a long “ mmmmm ” sound. Tasty!
- ✚ **Where is your breath?** Take five long breaths in and all the way out. Where do you feel it? Try to follow the breath in through your nose, to your chest and all the way to your tummy. Feel your tummy get bigger and smaller as you breathe, just like a balloon inflating and deflating.
- ✚ **Stop and go rainstorm breath:** Start by rubbing your hands together. Add in raindrops by tapping your hands on your thighs. As the storm builds, tap in double time and then pound your feet. Add a strike of lightening by saying “1-2-3” and thunder clap once to stop the storm. Take 5 long slow deep breaths in and out. Repeat the storm again if time allows.
- ✚ **Snake Breath:** Take a long breath in like you are breathing through a straw. Breath out through your mouth hissing like a snake as long as you can, exhaling completely.
- ✚ **Bumblebee Breath:** Hold your bumble bee wings at your sides. Breathe in through your nose and then wiggle your wings as you exhale as long as you can with a bumble bee buzz.
- ✚ **Bunny Breaths:** Make little paws with your arms in front of chest. Twitch your nose like a bunny as you take three quick breaths in through your nose and feel your bunny tummy get smaller as you breathe out slowly.
- ✚ **Scrunch and Let Go:** Start at your toes and tighten and scrunch each muscle group moving to your legs, hips, tummy, arms, face, and fists. Take a deep breath in and out and let all your muscles relax from head to toe. Ahhh!
- ✚ **The Warm-up Breath:** When chilly kids come in from outside, this can help them warm up and settle into the classroom. Start by rubbing your hands together for warmth and then warming up your cheeks with your hands while taking two deep breaths. Then repeat, rubbing your hands together and then placing them on your heart with two deep breaths. Finish by warming your hands one more time and then cross your arms around your chest for a big warm hug.

Resource: *Mindful Moments for Kids* by Kira Willey

Helpful Resources:

- ✚ mindfuleducators.mindful.org
- ✚ Top 6 apps for Mindfulness for students: Kid-friendly, grade appropriate guided apps, free to teachers K-12. **Calm, Headspace, My Life** (geared more for middle school and high school) **Smiling Mind, Dreamy Kid, and Insight Timer**.
- ✚ TEDx Talk by Kira Willey: Bite Sized Mindfulness: An Easy Way for Kids to be Happy and Healthy
- ✚ MindUP.org: Empowering children through mindful practice based in neuroscience
- ✚ Mindfulnessinschools.org: Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP) aims to improve the lives of children by making a genuine, positive difference to their mental health and wellbeing.