



A note from your student's occupational therapist

Here are some ways to promote your student's self-regulation skills over this extended spring break:

- Engage in conversation about feelings and perspectives of others:
 - The Zones of Regulation visual is a helpful way to check in with our feelings
 - Discuss the way our behaviors make other people feel
 - Participate in activities that focus on strengthening our "whole brain", as this has been a theme during our weekly social thinking groups
 - Activities that incorporate making decisions, using calming strategies, self-understanding, empathy and morality
- When handling a difficult or stressful situation, try these calming strategies:
 - Deep Breathing Techniques (see attachment)
 - Deep pressure input through hugs and gentle head or hand squeezes
 - Taking a break in a calm quiet space
 - Taking a movement break (e.g. take a walk outside, do a simple scavenger hunt, build a fort, dance to music, etc.)

Best regards,

Miss Bridgid

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25 Heavy Work Activities

for small spaces

- Massages
- Bear hugs
- Play with a Body Sock
- Yoga Poses
- Pulling resistance bands with hands
- Playing passing games with weighted stuffed animals
- Weighted sensory bottles
- Animal walks
- Wall pushes
- Chair dips
- Tossing and catching heavy bean bags
- Boxing with boxing gloves against a mat or bolster
- Roll a therapy ball up and down the wall
- Squeezing putty or play dough
- Playing tug of war with Pop Toobs
- Tearing paper (especially heavier card stock)
- Crumpling paper and shooting into a garbage can
- Pushing and pulling Squigz
- Cooking activities (e.g. kneading, stirring thick dough)
- Stepping up onto a chair or bench and jumping down (with close supervision!)
- Squeezing sensory balloons (filled with dry beans, dry rice, or play dough)
- Digging in a tactile bin of wet sand or Kinetic Sand
- Writing on and then wiping off or erasing a dry erase board
- Pushing feet against resistance band tied to the legs of a desk
- Wall sits

CALMING BREATHING TECHNIQUES

1 || Infinity Breathing

Visualizing an infinity symbol, or even tracing the symbol with one finger while breathing in and out, can be a helpful tool for kids to achieve a smooth, even breath cycle. Have kids inhale as they follow one half of the symbol and exhale as they follow the other half.

2 || Balloon Breathing

Another helpful breathing technique is to have kids visualize a balloon inside their bellies. As they breathe in, the balloon expands and as they breathe out, the balloon deflates.

3 || Alternate Nostril Breathing

For this breathing exercise, kids bring attention to their breath by holding one nostril closed as they breathe in and then holding the other nostril closed as they breathe out.

4 || 4 Count Breathing

Have kids breathe in for a count of 4, then pause to hold onto the breath for a count of 4, breathe out for a count of 4, and pause when the breath empties for a count of 4.

5 || Counting Breaths

For an even easier version of the technique above, simply have kids count their breaths until they get to 10 (counting 1 on the inhale, 2 on the exhale, and so on). Then, have them start over at 1.

6 || Beach Breathing


This is one of our favorite breathing visualization techniques. Have kids imagine that they're standing on the beach. As they inhale, have them imagine that they're drawing a wave up onto the sand. As they exhale, have them imagine the water receding back into the ocean or lake. Repeat.

7 || Draw a Square Breathing

This one adds a visual component to the 4 Count Breathing described above. On their desk or table, have kids trace a horizontal line with their fingers for a count of 4 as they breathe in (the top of the square). Then, trace downward to form the side of the square as they hold the breath for a count of 4. Then they trace horizontally again to make the bottom of the square as they exhale. And finally they trace upward to form the other side of the square as they hold their breath out. Repeat.

8 || Making an Object Move With the Breath

This is a great one to try with younger kids! Have the child lie on the floor with a toy or other small object resting on her tummy. Tell her to try to make the object rise and fall slowly by breathing deeply.



Outdoor Sensory Motor Scavenger Hunt

Can you find something...

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> to climb? | <input type="radio"/> to jump over? |
| <input type="radio"/> to play catch with? | <input type="radio"/> to walk across? |
| <input type="radio"/> to crawl under? | <input type="radio"/> to balance on your head? |
| <input type="radio"/> to roll across the ground? | <input type="radio"/> that is rough? |
| <input type="radio"/> that is heavy? | <input type="radio"/> that is soft? |
| <input type="radio"/> that is smooth? | <input type="radio"/> that is hard? |
| <input type="radio"/> that is squishy? | <input type="radio"/> that is loud? |