



Week 2 Toolkit · Family Version

The Body Knows the Answer – Movement & Relaxation

IAETDAA | International Arts Education & Therapy Development Academic Association

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1. Toolkit Basic Information

| Item | Details |
|-----------------------|---|
| Age Range | 3-12 years (see age-specific guidance below) |
| Duration per Session | 5-10 minutes |
| Recommended Frequency | Once daily, or whenever your child shows signs of tension or irritability |
| Best Time | After waking up, before bed, or during calming down after emotional moments |
| Materials Needed | None (only a quiet space and a mat/rug) |

2. Core Principles (Must Read for Parents)

Before you begin, remember these three rules:

1. **No forcing** – If your child doesn't want to participate, don't push. You do it yourself as a model.
2. **No correcting** – There is no "right way" to breathe. Your child can breathe however they like.
3. **Just accompany** – Your calm presence is the best guide for your child.

Why?

Children's physical tension is often a response to environmental stress. When you do these movements calmly and slowly, your child will naturally imitate you. The more you push, the more they resist.

3. Age-Specific Guidance

Ages 3-5 (Preschool)

Characteristics: Short attention span, loves imitation and games

How to guide:

Turn breathing into a game: "Let's see who can blow up their belly like a balloon!"

Use animal metaphors: "Breathe in and grow tall like a big bear. Breathe out and curl up like a turtle."

Keep sessions under 3 minutes

Expected outcome: Willing to lie down and try, even if only one breath

Ages 6-8 (Early Elementary)

Characteristics: Can understand simple instructions, but may find it "boring"

How to guide:

Add imagination: "When you breathe in, imagine you're smelling a very fragrant flower"

Turn it into a challenge: "Can we do 5 deep breaths in a row?"

Let your child be the "teacher" and guide you

Expected outcome: Can complete 3-5 full breathing cycles

Ages 9-12 (Upper Elementary)

Characteristics: Strong self-awareness, may resist "childish" activities

How to guide:

Reframe the activity: "This is a break time to recharge your brain"

Respect privacy: Everyone can lie in their own spot

Allow eyes open or closed

Expected outcome: Willing to lie quietly for 3-5 minutes

4. Detailed Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Prepare the Atmosphere (1-2 minutes)

Environment preparation:

Turn off the TV and music (if using background sound, choose very soft instrumental music)

Draw the curtains to soften the light

Lay out a mat or blanket on the floor

Opening scripts (choose one):

"Shall we play a 'body rest' game?"

"I'm going to do some deep breaths. Want to join me?"

"Our bodies are a little tired today. Let's help them relax."

If the child says "no":

Don't say "why aren't you cooperating"

Say: "Okay, watch me do it. You can join whenever you're ready."

Step 2: Body Preparation (1 minute)

Guiding script:

"Let's find a comfortable position. You can lie down or sit down – whatever feels good. Place your hands on your belly, or beside your body – either is fine."

Parents demonstrate first, then wait quietly for the child to adjust their position.

Step 3: Breathing Practice (3-5 minutes)

Core exercise: Drawing circles with your breath

Guiding script (word for word):

"Now, let's take three deep breaths together. Don't rush. Follow your own rhythm."

First breath: "Breathe in – (pause 3 seconds) – slowly breathe out – (pause 3 seconds)"

Second breath: "When you breathe in, feel your belly puff up like a balloon. When you breathe out, the balloon slowly deflates."

Third breath: "Breathe in – (pause) – breathe out – (pause). Good."

Stand up and continue:

"Now, let's slowly stand up. When you breathe in, slowly draw a big circle with your hands up above your head. When you breathe out, bring your hands back down to your sides. Let's do this three more times together."

Create your own movement:

"Now it's your turn. Can you invent a breathing movement of your own? Like breathing in as you grow tall like a tree, and breathing out as a leaf floats down. Anything is fine, as long as it's yours."

If the child doesn't want to create:

Don't say "just try it"

Say: "That's okay. Let's do the movement we just did one more time."

Step 4: Body Scan (2-3 minutes, optional)

If your child is receptive, continue:

Guiding script:

"Now lie down and gently close your eyes. Let's take a trip starting from your toes..."

"Notice your toes – are they tight, or loose?"

"Notice your lower legs, your knees, your thighs..."

"Notice your belly, going up and down with your breath..."

"Notice your shoulders – are they up near your ears, or relaxed?"

"Finally, notice your whole body – how does it feel right now?"

If your child can't close their eyes:

"You don't have to close your eyes. You can look at the ceiling."

Step 5: Closing (1 minute)

Closing script (must say):

"Okay, our body rest time is over. Slowly wiggle your fingers and toes. No rush – slowly sit up."

Connect with feelings:

"How does your body feel right now? Is it light, or heavy? Warm, or cool?"

Don't ask: "Are you relaxed?" (This creates pressure.)

5. Common Questions and Responses

| What the child does | What parents can do |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Keeps moving, can't sit still | Don't criticize. "It seems your body has a lot of energy today. Let's try something different – stand up and stomp your feet 10 times, then stomp the energy out." |
| Says "this is boring" | "Yes, being quiet can feel a bit boring. How about we do just 3 deep breaths and then stop?" |
| Breathes fast and shallow | Don't correct. Do slow deep breaths yourself – your child will naturally imitate. |
| Laughs during the exercise | This is a release of tension. Laugh along, then say: "Laughter is also relaxing. Shall we try once more, seriously?" |
| Cries afterward | Don't panic. Say: "I see tears. Sometimes when the body relaxes, emotions come out too. That's okay. I'm here with you." Just sit quietly with them. |
| Refuses to do any movement | Do the whole exercise yourself. Afterward, say: "I felt really good doing that just now." Don't ask why your child didn't participate. |

6. Weekly Checklist

Parents can print this checklist to track the week's activities:

| Date | Done (✓) | Child's Participation (1-5) | Child's State Afterward | Notes |
|--------|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Monday | | | | |

| Date | Done (✓) | Child's Participation (1-5) | Child's State Afterward | Notes |
|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Wednesday | | | | |
| Friday | | | | |
| Weekend | | | | |

Success Criteria (keep expectations low):

- ✓ The child was willing to lie down (even for 10 seconds)
- ✓ The child took one deep breath
- ✓ The child was quiet for 1 minute
- ✓ The child wasn't resistant to trying again next time

What NOT to expect:

- ✗ The child cooperating completely
- ✗ "Correct" breathing
- ✗ The child saying "I feel so relaxed"

7. Extension Activities (Optional)

Activity 1: Body Thermometer

Ask your child: "If your body had a thermometer – 0 means super relaxed, 10 means super tense – what number are you right now?"

After the breathing exercise, ask again: "What about now?"

You don't need them to explain why – just notice the change

Activity 2: Emotion-Body Map

Prepare a piece of paper with an outline of a human body

Ask your child: "When you feel angry, where do you feel it in your body? Color that spot."

Use different colors for different emotions

Activity 3: Bedtime Body Gratitude

Before bed, say together with your child: "Thank you, feet, for carrying me so far today. Thank you, hands, for helping me draw..."

Go slowly from feet to head

8. A Final Word for Parents

You are not a yoga teacher. You don't need to teach your child "correct breathing." You only need to do one thing: use your own calm presence to give your child a space where it's okay to slow down.

This week, start with one breath. Take it slowly.

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