

TIPS FOR “POSITIVE STRESS” RELIEF AT HOME!

Stress, even for young children, is a normal and healthy part of life! Our bodies are made to handle positive stress - like the feeling you get when it is the first day of school or work, or right before taking on a big day. For kids aged 2 and older, here are some simple things you can do at home to help lower stress before a big event or life change.

- Find ways to relax your bodies and calm your minds before a day you think could be stressful.
 - Practice breathing exercises. Find a few ideas below.
 - Picture a calm place.
 - Take a warm bath/shower.
 - Stretch.
 - Listen to relaxing music.
- Get a good night's sleep. Try to avoid video games, tablets, and TV right before you go to bed and have your children “check-in” their electronics with you at night. This helps them go to sleep on time.
- Eat healthy and balanced meals, especially on days you know might get stressful.
- Set a routine for yourself and for your child.
- Review and remind your child of what helped them get rid of stress the last time that they had a big event or change in their life.

Here are some simple exercises you can do at home with your child:

Think Positive Thoughts!

1. Repeat positive messages or practice positive self-talk.
Practice out loud then ask child to think to themselves:
 - i. I will be okay
 - ii. I can do this
 - iii. I am prepared
 - iv. I can do my best
 - v. I believe in myself
 - vi. I will do one thing at a time
2. Remember to feel proud of yourself for doing your best.
3. Celebrate your accomplishments with the people around you!

Bunny Breathing

1. Ask your child to imagine they are a bunny. Take three quick sniffs through the nose and one long exhale out the nose.
2. As your child starts to get the hang of it, encourage them to make the exhale slower and slow.

Smell the flower, blow out the candle

1. On in inhale, show your child how to hold up their pointer finger to their nose and pretend to smell the “flower”.
2. As they exhale, have them drop their finger to their mouth and pretend to “blow out the candle”.
3. Repeat 5 times.

If your child is not interested in breathing along, no problem! Try again later that day or in a few days.

Rise and Fall Breathing:

*This is a great exercise to do with your baby in your arms!

1. Find a comfortable place and sit or lie down.
2. Place both hands, or your baby, on your belly.
3. Take a deep slow breath in through your nose and feel the air travel down into your belly, making your abdomen and hands rise.
4. Slowly let air out and exhale through your mouth. Feel your hands and belly go down.
5. **If you are having a hard time doing belly breathing, just do slow and deep breathing.**
6. Repeat 4 – 5 times.

Beautiful Places:

*This is a great exercise to support imagination and imaginative play with children ages 2-5 years old

1. Think of a beautiful place. You may have been to this place. Or, it could be a place you want to go.
2. Imagine you are there for a few minutes. Relax.
3. Think about what you:
 - a. See at this place.
 - b. Hear at this place.
 - c. Smell at this place.
 - d. Feel at this place.
4. When you are ready, open your eyes.