

Ways to Help Your Child Relax: School Age Children

School age children can experience stress from school, sports, friends, and pressure to fit in. Below are some suggestions to help school age children work through stress.

Deep Breathing

Children can learn to take deep breaths, hold them, and then let them out. One type of deep breathing is holding your breath while counting to specific numbers. Another type of deep breathing is called 4-7-8 breathing. This is done by breathing in for 4 seconds, holding the breath for 7 seconds, and then letting it out for 8 seconds. Another way to practice taking deep breaths is to have the child imagine that they are smelling flowers and then blowing out birthday candles.

Guided Imagery

Guided Imagery uses your child's imagination to focus on something instead of his or her stress. Guided imagery can be done by imagining and describing a favorite place or situation. Guided Imagery can be led by you or your child. Things to imagine can include what the child may smell, the way a place would feel (hot/cold), how it might look, and what your child might hear.

Exercise

Exercise is a great way to relax and deal with stress. Walking, running, playing sports, and swimming are great ways to relax and deal with stress. Exercise is a great way to relieve tension in the body and to encourage activity. Make sure your child takes breaks and follows all doctor's orders.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation is done by squeezing and then releasing the different muscles in your body. You could have your child scrunch up his or her nose and forehead and then relax them; then squeeze his or her shoulders, then hands (ball up into fists), then relax. This can be done for all muscle groups.

More information on back

More Information to Help Your School Age Child Relax

Websites

kidsrelaxation.com

kidsrelaxation.com/guided-imagery-cd/

innerhealthstudio.com

innerhealthstudio.com/guided-imagery-scripts.html

childrenwithanxiety.com

moodcafe.co.uk

kidshealth.org/en/kids/stress.html?WT.ac=en-k-relax-center-c

copingskillsforkids.com/blog/calming-and-relaxing-coping-skills

sesamestreet.org/toolkits

youtube.com/watch?v=7zxBRBhxbNo (Sesame Street Belly Breathe song)

Apps

- We Breathe
- Calm
- Smiling Mind
- Relax App-Relaxation Music

Child Life Specialists

Child life specialists help children cope with the feelings they may have about their illness, injury, disability, or hospitalization.

To contact a child life specialist:

Call the Child Life Education and Support Line: (816) 983-6870

Email: childlifeambulatoryteam@cmh.edu

Children's Mercy Patient Portal: Child Life Messages