

## TEACHING CHILDREN WAYS OF CALMING DOWN

### Control of the breath

The most important first skill children need to learn is to take slow deep breaths. We sometimes call this controlled breathing.

Children first need to learn how to do controlled breathing when they are not upset. So practice controlled breathing when your child is calm. Here are some ideas to add to the ones we talked about in Module 7.

Belly breathing is a great way of teaching children to take slow deep breaths that will help them feel calmer. Here are the steps. Do each step and get your child to follow along.

1. Begin by lying down on your back
2. Close your eyes and breathe normally for 3 breaths
3. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your belly
4. Take an in breath through the nose and feel the air go right down to your belly. Notice if the hand on your belly moves up and the hand on your chest stays still.
5. Count to 4 on the in breath
6. Then slowly release the out breath and notice how the hand on your belly moves down
7. Count to 4 on the out breathe
8. Continue breathing into the belly for 2 - 5 minutes.

### Blowing big bubbles

This is a similar idea to the one above. Children take a big deep in breath and as they blow out they try to make the bubble as big as possible without popping. Again, this is going to help children learn to breathe deeply and control their out breath. If you don't have bubbles think about collecting some feathers and trying the same idea of gently blowing the feather.

### Bumble bee breathe

This idea is very old and used in many different yoga practices. We find children really like it. Sit comfortably (perhaps with your legs crossed). Place your fingers in your ears (perhaps close your eyes) and take a breath in through your nose. Make a hum on the out breath.... It makes a lovely humming noise – just like a bee.

## LEARNING TO MANAGE EMOTIONS

### Teaching Children to Calm Down by Taking A Deep Breath and Having a “Calm Down” Script

When children have learnt about controlled breathing and when they can link words to feelings there are many times when simply commenting and then both of you take several slow deep breaths can solve many problem moments of parenting.

Make an Action Plan to try this.

#### Lets make a Clam Down Plan

1. First think of a time when your child shows poor self-regulation
2. Where may this happen? Who else is there?
3. Now break up what you need to do into small steps to reach the goal of helping your child calm down when he is upset

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

Step 4:

Step 5:

Step 6: Do it!

#### A calm down script for you and your child

Children often learn a set of words to help with their calming down strategy: When all of the blocks fall over your child might say: “Oh dear, never mind, try again” or “Deep breath, try again”.

This is something your child has learnt from someone else – usually his parents or carers.

So it's good for you to have a script that you and your child can say when your child is frustrated. After a while it's become automatic and your child will say it in their head and won't need to say it out loud. But it all starts with you saying it over and over.

Write down a calm down script that you think would work with your child and introduce into your life? Perhaps you already have one that you could use more often?