



## Breathing Relaxation

- Use a bubble wand to teach children how to take deep breaths. Have them breathe in slowly and then breathe out into the wand to make the world's BIGGEST bubble.
  - Practice breathing into a tissue. Have the child hold it in front of their face. Then have them blow on it until it's horizontal and they can see your face.
  - Help kids learn "alternate nostril breathing". Gently rest the index finger and thumb on either side of the nose. Take a breath in; lightly press the left nostril and exhale through the right. Lightly press the right nostril to inhale through the left. Keep repeating this cycle. Alternate nostril breathing is a great way to help settle panicky kids.
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- You can assist kids with their slow breathing by helping them to count from one to three. Count with them (1, 2, 3) as they breathe in; do it again as they breathe out. Have them do this for one to two minutes. Next, have them say their troublesome thought slowly, in a relaxed voice (e.g. "I can't talk in front of the class").
  - Then, as explained in the Word Lifter game (#5), add top and tail thoughts to the following sentence: "I'm having a WorryBug thought that I can't talk in front of the class, BUT I know I can because I've done it before." This may take a bit of practice, but keep at it. The slow breathing will help to reinforce the child's capacity to be less distressed by the worry.
  - With older kids who love the ocean, you can achieve good breathing slowdown by getting them to imagine waves rolling in to shore on the exhale and then breathing in as the wave recedes.
  - Choose the breathing activity that best suits the age and interest of the child. The general rule is to practice for one to two minutes or until the child feels they have their breathing back under control.