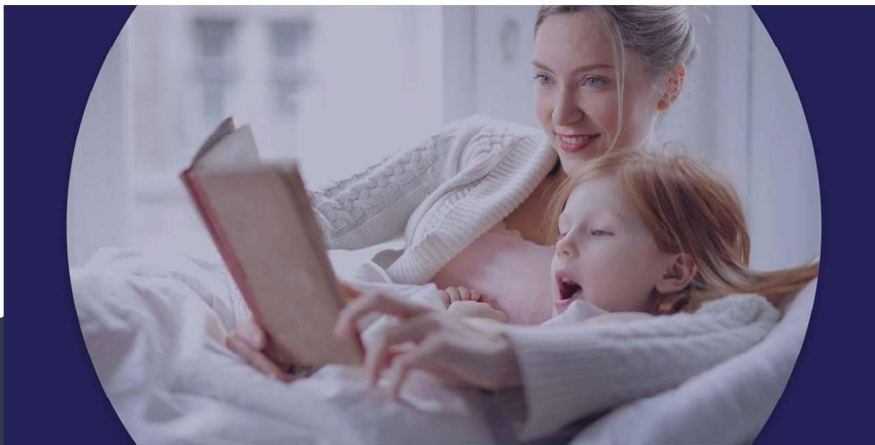


# How Can I Support My Child's Social and Emotional Growth?



# Transitions: How to Set Your Child Up for Success

- **Increased focus/attention:** develop through games & reading at home
- **Gradual independence:** don't do for child what can do for self; help with tasks; small chores, opening food packages (helpful for lunch time at school)
- **Attend school events** - shows importance of school and helps child to see connection with teacher and parent
- For children who have difficulty with transitions or separation, **practice** at home - run errands without child, spend night at grandparent's house, countdown calendar, visit the school/teacher



# Daily Routines

## Benefits:

- Structure
- Clear Expectations
- Consistency
- Predictable Schedules

While kids need to learn to be flexible and adapt, some routines are beneficial for everyone and help to avoid conflicts, decrease acting out behaviors and anxiety, teach time management, etc.

## Examples:

### **Sample Morning Routine:**

7:00 A.M. — Wake up your child.  
7:05 A.M. — Get ready:  
    — Wash face  
    — Comb hair  
    — Get dressed  
7:20 A.M. — Breakfast time.  
7:45 A.M. — Brush your teeth—  
    together.  
7:55 A.M. — Zip, tie, and layer up  
8:00 A.M. — Out the door!

### **Sample Bedtime Routine:**

8:00 P.M. — Have your child shower or take a relaxing bath.  
8:20 P.M. — Get into PJs, have a light snack, and clean up any toys left out from the evening.  
8:30 P.M. — Brush teeth and go to the bathroom.  
8:45 P.M. — Your child gets into bed. Read with your child briefly, or talk about your days together. Before turning off the lights, say your ritual goodnight  
9:00 P.M. — Turn off the lights and exit quietly.

# The Importance of Sleep

- Our brains consolidate and store everything we learned from the day.
- After just 1 week of lacking sleep, kids showed more inattentiveness and defiant behavior.



# Suggested Sleep Routine

One hour before bedtime...

- No screens (blue light)
- No heavy meal/snack
- No intense physical activity

Quiet/Calming activities...

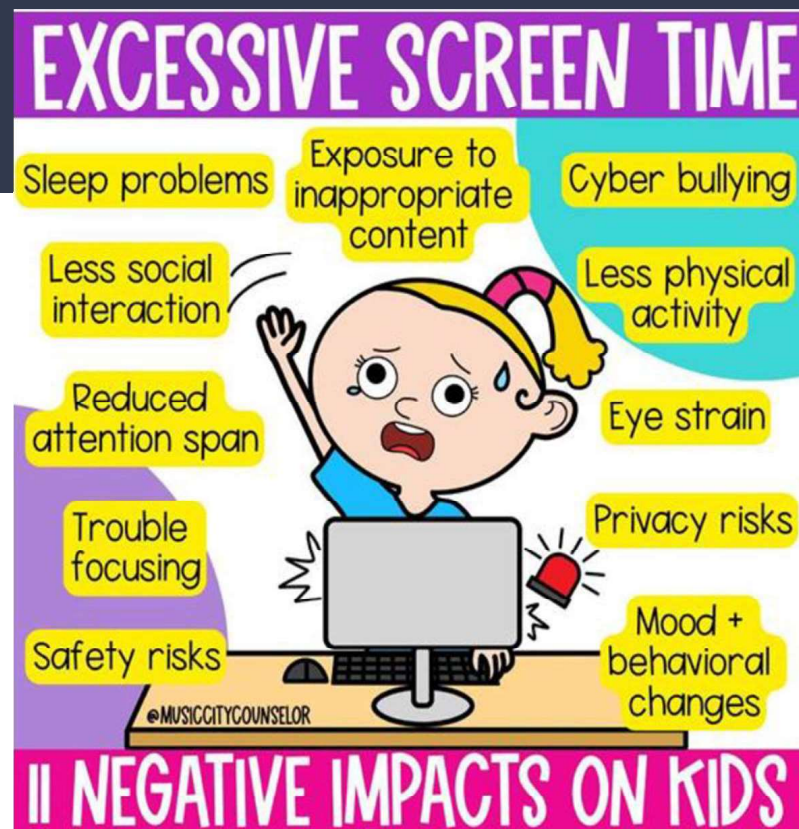
- Warm bath/shower
- Quiet music
- Reading/drawing/coloring



# Screen Time Routines

- **Set Expectations, Privacy and Controls:** It is too easy for small children to access adult content online. Know how to set limits and parental controls and either allow screen use only in your presence (at this age) and check history (as they get older).
- **AAP recommendation for ages 2-5:** Limit screen use to one hour per day of high-quality programs.
- **Not all screen time is created equal:** Watching a movie together as a family or playing an educational game online can build relationships and learning. (interactive vs. passive)
- **Balance is key:** schedule other activities and allow for play that does not involve screens.
- **Screen Free Zones:** Having areas of your home or times in the day that are screen-free benefits a child's health and development - i.e., dinner table
- **Be a Good Role Model!**

\*Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics, [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org), [commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org)



# The Importance of Unstructure Play

## **Benefits:**

- Physical development
  - Strength, fine and gross motor
- Cognitive development
  - Problem-solving, creativity
- Language development
  - Speaking and listening
- Social skill development
  - Sharing, turn-taking, empathy
- Emotional development
  - Awareness, calming



# Ages & Stages of Behavior Based on Brain Science

By Leah Porritt, Behavior Specialist

[www.afineparent.com](http://www.afineparent.com)

## Ages 3-6:

- Time of intense social growth
- Just the beginning of some logical thinking

## Common Behaviors:

- **Whining** - Take note that even though it may FEEL like this is an intentional attempt to grate on your nerves, our children are likely not even aware they are doing it!
- **Not listening** - Also easy to take as a personal attack on our feng shui as we repeat ourselves for the 143rd time...children at this age begin to understand that us asking them to do something doesn't actually mean that they HAVE to do it.
- **Impulsivity** - Even when our children know and understand that a particular behavior is not accepted, they **may still be developing the brain connections needed for self-control**. The result of this brain-based imbalance can mean actions that happen on a whim.

[https://afineparent.com/positive-parenting-faq/ages-and-stages-of-behavior.html?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=1165200-ages-stages-of-behavior-based-on-brain&utm\\_source=lists%2F40942-AFineParent-Com-Inspiration-And-Tips&simplero\\_object\\_id=su\\_FvJQLyfcTsUMzXu2zR5JDbUF](https://afineparent.com/positive-parenting-faq/ages-and-stages-of-behavior.html?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=1165200-ages-stages-of-behavior-based-on-brain&utm_source=lists%2F40942-AFineParent-Com-Inspiration-And-Tips&simplero_object_id=su_FvJQLyfcTsUMzXu2zR5JDbUF)

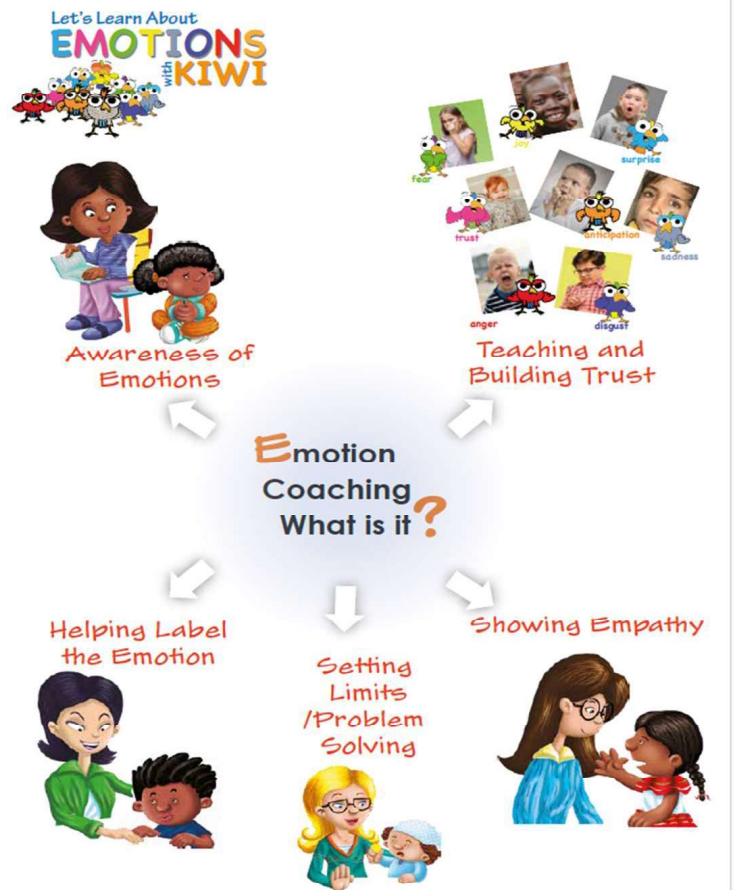
# Ages & Stages of Behavior Based on Brain Science

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1. **Catch them doing the right thing** - It's easy to not notice our child's behavior until it becomes an inconvenience to the flow of the day. This can accidentally encourage attention-seeking behavior when our children figure out that the best method to get quick attention is through negative behaviors. Rather than waiting, we can make **purposeful efforts** to catch our child demonstrating the good behavior we want and call them out for it in a positive way.
2. **Model the behavior you want to see** - **Children learn much more from watching us** than from listening to our words. We want to model what we want our children to exhibit! For example, when you get angry at your child, instead of yelling at them, stop for a minute and take deep breaths. And narrate it out loud: *"Mommy is getting angry. She has to take deep breaths so she doesn't end up shouting."*
3. **Set clear boundaries and limits** - Less words are always better in setting limits; too many words can be confusing to young children, especially when they are frustrated or upset. We also want to ensure that boundaries and rules are realistic to what our children are capable of and that we can consistently enforce the consequences that may come with not following the limit.

You are your child's first teacher!



Let's Learn About  
**EMOTIONS**  
with **KIWI**



## Be aware of your own emotions:



1. Be aware your own feelings. Remember: awareness of your own feelings directly effects how well you will tune into your child's feelings.
2. Children learn by watching.
3. Allow your children to see you have feelings.
  - Express disappointment.
  - Show sadness.
  - Express feelings of anger or fear.
4. Showing emotion does not mean children can meet your needs.

## Ask yourself:

Am I aware of my emotions?

How do I show emotions to my children?

Do I mask them?

Do I manage them?



Let's Learn About  
**EMOTIONS**  
with **KIWI**



## Be aware of your child's emotions:



1. Emotion manifests itself in many ways.
2. Clue into behaviors that may indicate emotion change of mood, crying, won't talk to you.
3. Look at behaviors through a lens of emotion / feelings.
4. Ignoring feelings does not make them go away.

## Listen with empathy:

1. "Empathy" or "Sympathy".
2. Validation: accepting someone's feelings without judgment.
3. Validating statements:
  - I hear you
  - I would feel the same
  - That's no fun
  - That must hurt





## Help your child label the emotion:

Put words to the emotion if you can or ask questions to explore:

- You look pretty sad.
- I can see you are upset.
- That really bothered you, didn't it?
- What bothers you most about it?
- You seem worried, scared, etc.



## Set limits and help your children to problem solve:

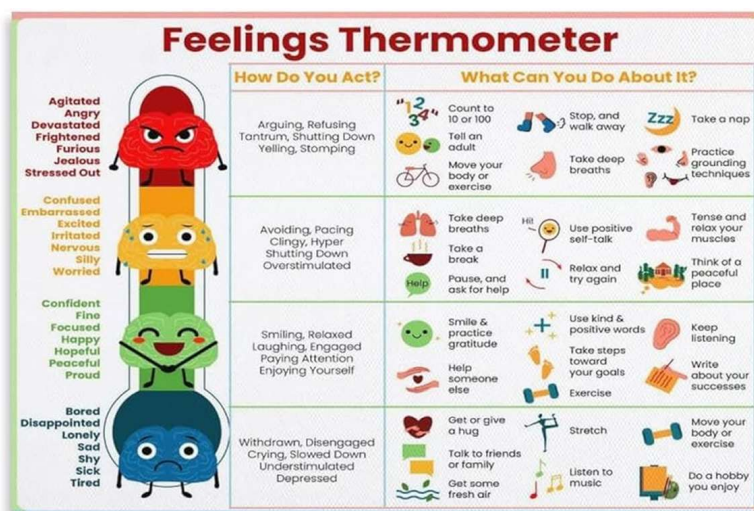
1. After labeling emotion, set parameters.
2. Convey the message that feelings are not the problem, misbehavior is.
3. Have child identify goals.
4. Encourage child to think of possible solutions.
5. If necessary, offer ideas or suggestions.
6. Help the child pick the solution that is most suitable and best.
7. Discuss ramifications of possible solutions.
8. If the child does not want to come up with a solution, discuss ramifications of not having one.
9. Don't give into the temptation to fix the problem for the child.

# Emotional Regulation: Name It to Tame It!

**NAME IT** - teach emotional vocabulary (books, charts), teach kids to recognize what the feelings look like (faces) and feel like (body awareness).

**TAME IT** - teach and practice calming skills

- **Time and space:** less verbal interaction; just sit with them; have a place they can go to calm down
- **Deep breathing**
- **Sensory/Mindfulness** (music, fidgets, weighted items, lavender, grounding,...)
- **Movement**




# Handouts


## The Many Benefits of Good Sleep

A good night's sleep allows your brain and body to develop in many ways. Kids and teens should get more sleep than adults. Getting good sleep can provide the following benefits:


### Get Fully Recharged!

 Your body uses sleep as fuel to gain energy. If you get good sleep, you will have more energy to take on your daily activities.


### Helps You Be More Creative

 Better sleep helps your brain make connections and solve problems, which fuels creativity. Lack of sleep causes your brain to struggle to form ideas and perform at its best.


### Good Mood, Less Stress

 Sleep stabilizes mood and stress. Sleep problems can cause more irritability, and make you more prone to anxiety or depression.


### Improves Brain Functioning

 Good sleep improves your ability to focus and be attentive. It helps you to think more clearly, and helps to improve brain functions such as memory, decision making, effort, and motivation. This can help you perform better at school or work.


### Lowers Risk Of Serious Health Problems

 Research has shown that poor sleep can increase your risk of illness and disease such as type 2 diabetes or heart disease. Studies also show that good sleep can increase your life span.


### Helps Control Weight

 Poor sleep has been linked to weight gain and obesity in children, teens, and adults.

### Boost Immune System

 Getting good sleep can make your immune system stronger. Good sleep has been found to help immune system T-cells fight infection, which helps you prevent illness and recover from illness.

### Helps You Grow

 Sleep helps you grow. Your brain releases a growth hormone when you're asleep. It promotes development during puberty, as well as growth spurts in early life.

Overall, good sleep helps you to live a longer, healthier, and more fulfilling life!

### Follow Recommended Sleeping Hours

Toddler (1-2 yrs. old)	11-14 hours a day
Preschool (3-5 yrs. old)	10-13 hours a day
School-age (6-12 yrs. old)	9-12 hours a day
Teen (13-18 yrs. old)	8-10 hours a day

### Do

- Practice relaxation or stress relief activities before bed
- Follow a fixed sleep schedule
- Create a calming sleep environment
- Avoid daytime naps

### Don't

- Drink coffee or drinks with caffeine before sleeping
- Eat heavy meals
- Go to bed hungry
- Use electronics at bedtime

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## Tips To Improve Sleep

Experiment with different strategies to achieve good sleep. Below are some tips to help get you started.

### Routines, Activities, And Coping Skills

**Be more active** – During the day try to exercise for 30 minutes or more at moderate to high intensity.

**Do relaxing exercises** – Quiet down your thoughts by meditating, deep breathing, visualizing relaxing places, progressive muscle relaxation, or other calming exercises.

**Consistent sleep schedule** – Stick to the same bedtime and wake up time each night; this helps you keep your body & internal clock on track. Avoid daytime naps.

**Regular bedtime rituals** – Help your body recognize when it's time to sleep; do calming things at the same time every night (read books, listen to music, warm bath or shower, etc.).


**Manage your worries** – Relieve stress and solve concerns before bedtime by keeping a diary where you can release what's bothering you at night.


**Essential oils** – Try lavender, chamomile, valerian, or clary sage.

**Soothing music or audio books** – Use a Bluetooth speaker so you can avoid being on your device at bedtime.

**Guided meditations** – There are various apps or audio tracks found online or on YouTube. You can also try written scripts that can be read by a caring adult.

### Eating Habits

 **Avoid caffeine** – Coffee, soda, energy drinks, or any other caffeinated drink after 4:00pm.

 **Eat on time** – Eat meals at the same time each evening, and avoid eating heavy meals and snacking late at night. Also, avoid going to bed hungry.

 **Sleep-enhancing food and drinks** – Try almonds, walnuts, kiwi, fish, turkey, or milk.

 **Tea** – Try chamomile, passionflower, or other caffeine-free herbal teas.

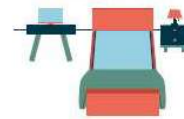
### How Long Should You Sleep?



- Children age 5-12: 9-12 hours
- Teens age 13-18: 8-10 hours

\*\*If you have consistent trouble falling or staying asleep at night, or trouble staying awake during the day you should consult with your doctor.

### Environment



● Do not use electronic devices before sleeping (phones, laptops, tablets, video games). Turn off all devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.

● A cool, dark, quiet, calm room is ideal.

● Only use your bed for sleep; not for relaxing, watching TV, playing video games, or doing homework.

● Get comfortable with soft pillows, blankets, or stuffed animals. Some may enjoy a weighted blanket.

● Dim the lights, or use a night light if it provides comfort.

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Self-regulation is all about having the ability to manage our emotions and respond to what our bodies need in an emotional situation. Below is a list of suggestions that will help support your child's self-regulation.

1

**Stay calm, show empathy and model self-regulation.**

In the very moment your child is reacting, they enter survival mode where listening to you and responding with logic is difficult. By staying calm, showing that you care and offering sensory experiences/other calming strategies, it can make all the difference in getting your child back to their "set point".

**2 Be supportive and encouraging.**

When dealing with an influx of emotions, your child may lose self-esteem and feel unheard. Be there for them with uplifting and positive words to coach them through a rough time.

3

**Reduce unnecessary demands.**

In an already fast paced world, your child may be dealing with more responsibilities than they can handle. Stay on top of your child's routines and help rearrange tasks/responsibilities/events so that your child is not overloaded.

**4 Provide structure and consistency.**

When children know what is expected of them and when an action/event is predictable, this can help to decrease levels of stress within your child.

5

**Ensure your child is sleeping well, has a balanced diet and regular exercise.**

All of these are essential to helping your child's brain function fully and appropriately.

**6 Spend quality time with your child regularly. Listen attentively.**

7

Expand your child's vocabulary by teaching them about emotions and ways to stay regulated.

8

Model and help children provide opportunities to practice their skills.

9

**Give specific and immediate feedback.**

Here you should reframe failure as opportunities to learn and be better, focus on effort and not the end result.

10

Work together on a toolbox of coping strategies to use when dysregulated.

**Physical break**

Sports, having a dance party, going for a walk

**Mental break**

Listening to music, playing a board-game, doing a puzzle, watching a movie, arts and crafts

**Sensory break**

Making slime, eating something crunchy, soothing music/nature sounds, rolling down a hill

**Positive self-talk**

"10 things I am good at", "10 things I like about me", affirmations

**Social support**

Asking for help, talking it out with friends, teachers, parents, connecting with others

## LET YOUR CHILD FEEL THEIR FEELINGS

It's important to let your child be sad. It's NOT helpful when we try to make it better for them, distract them, or try our hardest to limit the times when they might get hurt.



### INSTEAD OF...

Distracting with treats or screentime:  
"Let's get your favorite ice cream, it will make you feel better."



### TRY THIS...

Show empathy:  
"I know this is really hard for you. I'm here if you need me."

### INSTEAD OF...

Pushing the sadness away because it makes you feel uncomfortable:  
"Go to your room until you can come back with a smile."



### TRY THIS...

Give encouragement:  
"It's okay to feel sad. Our emotions help us process things. Everyone feels sad sometimes."

### INSTEAD OF...

Bottling up the sadness with toxic positivity:  
"Let's just think about something happy."



### TRY THIS...

Give ideas to help process the sadness:  
"Do you want to talk or write about what you're feeling?"

### INSTEAD OF...

Making your child feel like there's something wrong with them:  
"Just stop crying already, you've been crying all day."



### TRY THIS...

Offer attentive listening:  
"I'm here if you want to talk or need a hug."

### WHEN WE RUSH UNCOMFORTABLE FEELINGS AWAY...

We teach kids to bottle their feelings up (which often results in explosions later) and prevent emotional learning and healing

### WHEN WE HOLD SPACE FOR THEIR SADNESS, ANGER, FEAR...

We teach our kids how to soothe themselves, pick themselves up, and move on from physical and emotional hurts.

## How are You Feeling?

I am angry.



I am bored.



I am scared.



I am sad.



I am worried.



I am jealous.



I am embarrassed.



I am happy.



## Benefits Of Belly Breathing (Diaphragmatic Breathing)

### What's Belly Breathing?

Diaphragmatic breathing, also known as "belly breathing" is a deep breathing strategy using our diaphragm, a large muscle that separates the chest from the abdomen. When breathing in, the diaphragm muscle moves downward and the belly expands.

### Who Should Do It?

Everyone can benefit from practicing belly breathing. It is particularly good for those who have trouble relaxing, including those with:

- High stress or lots of worries
- Frequent anger and other big emotions
- Hyperactivity or impulsivity
- Sensory needs

### Benefits Of Belly Breathing

- Slows heart rate and lowers blood pressure
- Releases endorphins or feel-good hormones to improve mood
- Improves the health of your heart, brain, lungs, and other organs
- Strengthens immune system
- Calms your brain and body
- Boosts energy levels
- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Improves mental focus
- Improves digestion
- Improves sleep patterns



### Effective Belly Breathing Tips

- Focus on your belly expanding
- Use a breath pacer app or online breath pacer to help you practice breathing
- Remember the diaphragm is a muscle, so the more you practice belly breathing the easier it will get
- Breathe out longer than you breathe in for more relaxation
- Practice daily
- If you feel uncomfortable, return to your normal breathing

### How Is It Done?

#### Step-By-Step Guide To Belly Breathing

**Step 1:** Lie on your back on a bed or flat surface.

**Step 2:** Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Or you can place a light object like a tissue on your belly to see the rising and falling of the object when you're breathing.

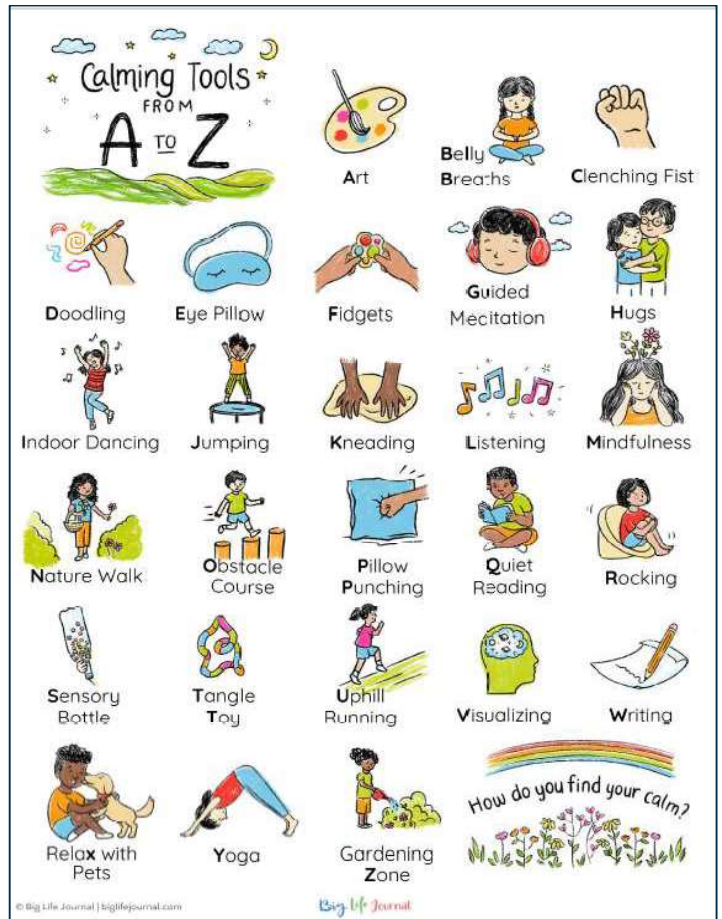
**Step 3:** Breathe in slowly through your nose allowing the air to reach your lower belly. Breathe in for 3-4 seconds and feel your belly expand. You want your chest to stay still and your belly to rise. You can hold the breath for 2 seconds at its deepest point.

**Step 4:** Breathe out slowly and steadily through your mouth for 5-8 seconds and note that your hand on your belly should move down. A long outbreath is important.

**Step 5:** Pause for 2 seconds at the end of your outbreath. The return to step 3. Repeat for 3-12 minutes.

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## Lazy 8 Breathing

Our skating rink is shaped like an 8 on its side. The skaters glide along the ice, smooth and slow. Skate a figure 8 with your finger! Enter the rink and move up, tracing the left part of the 8 while you breathe in. When you get to the middle of the 8, breathe out while you trace the right part of the 8.



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