
MINDFULNESS AND SELF-REGULATION ACTIVITIES

This is an excellent time to begin to teach more self-regulation and mindfulness activities. Just a few have been included here, but many more can be found by doing a Google search.

Square Breathing: First demonstrate square breathing without explanation. Then invite the kids to join you. Tell them they are going to use their pointer fingers as imaginary pencils to draw an imaginary square in the air in front of them while they breathe in and out. Then say, “As you breathe in slowly, draw your line up. When you get to the top (counting silently one, two), hold your breath as you move your finger to the right and complete the drawing of the top of your box to the count of two. When you get to where the line is going to be drawn down, slowly let out your air, or breathe out, to the count of two. And, when you reach the bottom of your breath, hold it and draw the rest of your box so your drawing of a square is complete.”

After leading the group with the instructions, just count the box sides as they continue the practice, saying, “Breathe in, one, two; Hold, one, two; Breathe out, one, two; Hold, one two; etc.” Another variation of the square breathing mindfulness practice is to have the kids close their eyes while doing it.

Birthday Candles: Ask the children to put up the number of fingers that correspond to their age. Then have them pretend these fingers are birthday candles. Explain that, with each candle that is “blown out,” they can focus on one wish they have for themselves, for their families, classmates, school, or whomever they want. The idea is to take time with each candle. When the candle is “blown out,” that finger goes down, and a new breath blows out a new candle with a new wish.