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Gentle Techniques From Around The World To Help Calm Your Kids

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After another busy day at the office you rush home through heavy traffic to pick up one child at daycare and then making it to the bus stop just in time to meet your seven-year-old from school. When you finally get home you quickly get some snacks ready for the kids. But while in the kitchen your seven-year-old starts throwing blocks at his younger sister. Entering the room, you begin speaking in a loud 'parent' voice: "if you do that one more time I'm going to ..."

Sound familiar? Want to try something different? Here are some simple techniques that you and your kids can easily do, drawing from Capacitar for Kids (<http://www.capacitar.org>) — a multicultural wellness education program for children, families and schools.

Re-Balance With Helicopter Spins

What you can say: "Let's swing our arms, and have one touch our back while the other touches our chest. Let's spin our arms faster and faster like a helicopter and shout 'whirr ... whirr'. Now let's slow down, slower and slower, stop. Great. Let's have our snack together now."

What this does: This energy exercise, drawn from ancient Tai Chi, helps to release stress. With regular practice, the movements bring healing and harmony to body, mind and spirit. Tai Chi movements can be used at the start of the day, after recess, before a test to help children release stress, or at home to help calm their spirits and focus attention.

Recommended Reading: Here's When to Seek Professional Help for Your Child's Mental Health (<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/learning/view/when-to-see-professional-help-for-your-child>)

Calm Down Using The Tummy Balloon Game

What you can say: "Let's play the tummy balloon game. Close your eyes and put your hands over your tummy. Now, breathe the air in slowly through your nose. Feel how your tummy is rising like a big balloon? Hold your breath for a few moments. Now breathe out slowly through your mouth feeling your tummy balloon emptying of air, letting go of all tension and worries as you breathe out. Let's play the game a few more times. Then slowly open your eyes — how do you feel now?"

What this does: Breath work is the source of life, bringing fresh energy into the tissues and cells to nourish body, mind and spirit. When we exhale, we release accumulated stress. Breathing through a stressful time is an effective way to let go of the tension that accumulates in the body. A few long deep breaths can completely change the way we feel about a situation. Feelings and emotions can be released and cleared out of the body by working with the breath.

Recommended Reading: 5 Ways to Build Your Child's Resilience in an Anxious World (<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/learning/view/five-ways-to-build-your-childs-resilience-in-an-anxious-world>)

Lessen Anxiety Or Headaches With Head Holding

What you can do: Place the palm of one hand on your child's forehead and, with your other hand, press gently at the base of skull at the back of her neck. Hold her head for two or three minutes as your child becomes calmer and calmer.

What this does: The Head Hold consists of simple energy contacts. One hand lightly holds the head high on the forehead; the other hand holds the base of the skull. The practice can be used for anxiety, emotional or physical pain, traumatic memories, strong feelings and emotions such as anger or fear, insomnia or deep relaxation. Some believe that the energy of the hands connects with parts of the brain related to memories and emotions. This acupressure exercise can be done with another person, or you can easily do the practice with yourself.

Understand And Manage Emotions With Finger Holds

This practice originated from Indonesian cultures to release and balance the experience of strong emotions. The exercise consists of holding each finger for a few minutes.

- Thumb is for grief, tears and emotional pain
- Index Finger is for fear, terror and panic
- Middle Finger is for anger, rage and resentment
- Ring Finger is for worry, anxiety and preoccupation
- Small Finger is for self-esteem and negative self-image

What you can do: Have your children trace their hands. Then write the name of the emotions on the associated finger. Ask your children to paint each finger with a colour that they feel matches the emotion. Talk about why they chose each colour.

Tape the colored hand picture with the emotions in an appropriate place in their bedroom as a reminder of their feelings. Use age-appropriate words, explanations and examples for the feelings and emotions when working with your kids. This practice is a good way to invite children into conversation about difficult feelings or when challenging things happen. You can teach your kids to hold their finger when they are having strong feelings such as being afraid, angry or sad. Or you can hold their appropriate finger and breath calmly with your child, then perhaps having a gentle conversation about how they are feeling now.

What this does: The fingerholds can be an important tool for teaching emotional literacy. Kids (and adults) often have difficulty recognizing and understanding their feelings and emotions. Through this practice they are able to identify emotional states, as well as work to release the energy of the emotion. Fingerholds may be done in many

ways such as: a meditation, visualization with music or used before going to sleep to release the problems of the day and to bring deep relaxation to body, mind and spirit.

For more: The Psychology Foundation of Canada also has practical and research-based strategies and resources that are designed to help kids thrive emotionally, helping them to cope with the inevitable ups and downs of life. Visit psychologyfoundation.org

(<https://psychologyfoundation.org/>) to access free resources for you and to support your children.



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