

Relaxation Script for Younger Children

Hands & Arms

Pretend you are squeezing a whole lemon in your left hand. Squeeze it hard. Try to squeeze all the juice out. Feel the tightness in your hand and arm as you squeeze. Now drop the lemon and relax. See how much better your hand and arm feel when they are relaxed. Repeat with other hand.

Arms and Shoulders

Pretend you are a furry, lazy cat. You want to stretch. Stretch your arms out in front of you. Raise them up high over your head. Way back. Feel the pull in your shoulders. Stretch higher. Now just let your arms drop back to your side. Okay kitten, stretch again. Repeat.

Shoulder and Neck

Now pretend you are a turtle. You're sitting out on a rock by a nice, peaceful pond, just relaxing in the warm sun. It feels nice and warm and safe here. Oh-Oh! You sense danger. Pull your head into your house. Try to pull your shoulders up to your ears and push your head down into your shoulders. Hold in tight. It isn't easy to be a turtle in a shell. The danger is past now. You can come out into the warm sunshine and once again you can relax and feel the warm sunshine. Watch out now. More danger. Hurry pull your head back into your house and hold it tight. Repeat.

Jaw

You have a giant jawbreaker bubble gum in your mouth. It's very hard to chew. Bite down on it. Hard! Let your neck muscles help you. Now relax. Just let your jaw hang loose. Notice how good it feels just to let your jaw drop. Okay, let's tackle that jawbreaker again now. Repeat.

Face and Nose

Here comes a pesky old fly. He has landed on your nose. Try to get him off without using your hands. That's right, wrinkle up your nose. Make as many wrinkles in your nose as you can. Scrunch your nose up real hard. Good. You've chased him away. Now you can relax your nose. Oops here he comes back again. Repeat.

Stomach

Hey! Here comes a cute baby elephant. But he's not watching where he's going. He doesn't see you lying there in the grass, and he's about to step on your stomach. Don't move. You don't have time to get out of the way. Just get ready for him. Make your stomach very hard. Tighten up your stomach muscles real tight. Hold it. It looks like he is going the other way. You can relax now. Let your stomach go soft. Let it be as relaxed as you can. That feels so much better. Oops, he's coming this way again. Get ready. Repeat.

Legs and Feet

Now pretend that you are standing barefoot in a big, fat mud puddle. Squish your toes down deep in to the mud. Try to get your feet down to the bottom of the mud puddle. Push down, spread your toes apart, and feel the mud squish up between your toes. Now step out of the mud puddle. Relax your feet. Let your toes go loose and feel how nice that is. It feels good to be relaxed. Repeat...

Child Relaxation Script

I'm going to ask you to relax.

In a few minutes, I am going to say some things that I hope will help you create a picture in your mind...

I am also going to ask you to relax different parts of your body. Learning to relax will help you cope with angry, sad, and scary feelings.

Find a comfortable position in your chair, not touching anyone, and take in a few relaxing breaths...

Close your eyes and relax...

Wiggle a little bit and make yourself comfortable...

Alright, take a few more relaxing breaths...

breathe in...and breathe out...breathe in...and breathe out.

That's it – you are feeling peaceful.

If you were angry, you can picture yourself moving from hot to cold on the thermometer.

Becoming more and more relaxed, cold, peaceful.

Now, with your eyes closed, pretend that you are on a white fluffy cloud, high in the sky on a beautiful day.

You are floating peacefully on that white fluffy cloud...

moving very slowly...you are as light as a feather...

and the fluffy cloud holds you safely...floating across the sky.

Now, as I count from 1 to 3, imagine that you are sinking deeper and deeper into that cloud...so the cloud is all around you.

1...2...3

you are enjoying the ride on the cloud.

Now, notice your toes and feet, how relaxed they feel...

notice your legs...all the muscles in your legs are light

and relaxed on the cloud...notice your arms...

Notice your neck...notice your head...

now you are totally relaxed...floating on the fluffy cloud...

Remember that you can return to your very own cloud whenever you feel like you need to calm down and relax...

Whenever you need to cool off...move from hot to cool on the thermometer...

Now, we are getting ready to stop our ride on the cloud.

We will stop on the count of three...1...2...3

Open your eyes and stretch a little.

Discussion of the Relaxation Experience:

- ◇ "How did you feel doing this activity?"
 - ◇ "What did you like best? Least?"
 - ◇ "How could you use this activity?"
 - ◇ "What are the benefits?"
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A Relaxing Rainbow

"Allow your eyes to gently close and focus on your breathing ... we're letting all our troubles float away ... in beautiful rainbow balloons. Imagine a beautiful colored rainbow floating above your head ... the purples and the blues ... the greens and the yellows ... the oranges and the reds ... and maybe some gold and silver.... Notice what colors your special rainbow is.... And as you breathe, this beautiful rainbow grows larger and larger ... and starts to gently wash over you ... to help you relax.... And to go inside and find that special calm place that waits for you each day." You might now suggest the child relax each part of his/her body as the rainbow light moves through. And then....

"As you breathe you are totally safe in the rainbow light ... totally safe ... totally protected ... very, very comfortable."

Creating Your Magic Garden

"You find yourself surrounded by the rainbow light as you walk on a special path ... there are beautiful rainbow flowers around you ... and birds singing.... In front of you is a large stunning gate. It is a gate that leads you to your own magic garden. And there is a key to open this magnificent gate ... It's found under a rock.... Notice whether your key is gold or silver or copper.... The key has your initials carved in it so you know this is your gate and your key.... And one of your special animal friends now appears from around the rock. It is an animal friend that is very wise and very loving, and is here to help you build and grow your magic garden." At this point have the child enter the gate and create their magic garden. You may suggest any plants, trees, flowers, fruits, etc.

"Anything you want you can plant in this magic garden ... You may even plant seeds of peace ... and of joy and happiness ... and of calmness ... or any other qualities you would like to increase or bring in your life ... This is your own space ... This is a very magical time."

Discovering the Healing Pond

For the healing pond, you can adjust the message depending if the child has physical or emotional hurts, or if your focus is on building their capabilities.

"Now there's a part of this garden that has a wonderful healing pond. So you go over to it ... and this too is a magical place. As you step in the water ... which is the perfect temperature for you ... there is a beautiful long rock ... with soft, fluffy moss on it so you can lie with your head out of the water where you're totally comfortable ... And as you lie in the healing waters ... they wash over you ... and soothe your body ... and soothe your feelings ... and any pains or tightness melts away ... And it's a wonderful place to be as your garden grows. Your little animal friend has helped prepare some magic healing herbal tea for you so that when you drink it ... any sadness or hurts inside your body disappear and melt away ... so that all the goodness ... and all the health ... and all the joy that you deserve now appears."

The Blossoming of the Garden

And when you are ready ... step out of the healing pond and dry off ... Your garden has turned into the most magnificent magical place that you can imagine. See what you have created ... the beauty ... the magnificence ... everything.... How incredible and important you are for being able to plant seeds that grow to be tall and healthy ... just like you are growing. Know that when you have the time to plant seeds ... and the time to care for them ... wonderful things can grow."

The Wisdom of the Animal Friend

Your special animal friend points out that there is one very precious flower that is calling to you ... you lean down near the flower and you smell it ... it smells wonderful. And notice what it is ... and how big it is ... and it's special shape. And the flower seems to be talking to you

and it tells you something very important for you to know now in your life. To help your own magic grow within yourself. To help all the seeds within you ... and all your goodness ... come out. And when you look inside this flower there is a beautiful gift that springs up toward you ... Something to help you remember your own special growth ... And to know how wonderfully you're doing."

The Return

Now you can lead the child back out of the garden with the suggestion that they can return when they want.

"When you're ready you'll come back here ... slowly ... feeling your body ... feeling refreshed and remembering all good things.... remembering that wonderful magic garden ... and all the things you grew ... and saw ... and heard ... and felt ... remembering everything...."

Active Relaxation

Most people are not aware that when they are upset or agitated, one or more of their muscle groups are tense, and their breathing is rapid and shallow. If we can learn to control our muscle tension and our breathing, we can teach our bodies to stay relatively calm and relaxed even in upsetting situations. The following is a procedure for achieving relaxation quickly. By practicing every day, within two to three weeks, you will be able to relax your body by simply saying, "Relax," to yourself in real life situations with your child and in other stressful situations as well.

1. Get comfortable in your chair. Place your arms on the arms of the chair. Close your eyes and keep them closed throughout the entire exercise.
 2. Become aware of the various muscle groups in your body (e.g., hands and arms; face, neck and shoulders; chest and stomach; hips, legs, and feet).
 3. Bend your arms at the elbow. Then, make a tight fist with both hands while tightening biceps and forearms. Hold for 5 seconds. Pay attention to the tension. Then relax. Pay attention to the relaxation.
 4. Tense your entire face and shoulders, tightly shut your eyes and wrinkle your forehead, pull the corners of your mouth towards your ears, tighten your neck and hunch your shoulders. Hold for 5 seconds. Pay attention to the tension. Relax. Pay attention to the relaxation.
 5. Take in a deep breath and arch your back. Hold this position for 5 seconds. Now relax. Take in another deep breath and press out your stomach. Hold..... and relax.
 6. Raise your feet off the floor while keeping your knees straight. Pull your feet and toes back toward your face and tighten the muscles in your shins. Hold...and relax. Now, curl your toes down toward the floor, tighten your calves, thighs and buttocks and hold.....and relax.
 7. Scan each muscle group in your mind and relax any tense muscles.
 8. Now, become aware of your breathing. Slow your breathing down as you breathe in and out, in and out.
 9. With your next deep breath, count slowly from 1 to 5 as you breathe in and count from 6 to 10 as you breathe out. Your stomach should expand and deflate with each breath.
 10. Repeat this deep, slow, breathing...in and out...in and out... Stop when you are feeling deeply relaxed.
 11. Say the word, "Relax" to yourself approximately 20 times every time you exhale.
 12. Now, gradually let your breathing return to normal and open your eyes.
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RELAXATION TRAINING PRACTICE

Practice the relaxation method we learned in session today at least twice a day. Write down each day and time that you practice. Also, write down how tense or nervous you were before relaxing and then how relaxed you are after relaxing. Use a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the most nervous and tense you have ever felt and 1 being the most relaxed and calm you have ever felt. Bring this in with you to your next session.

Day: _____

Time 1: _____

Before: _____

After: _____

Time 2: _____

Before: _____

After: _____

Day: _____

Time 1: _____

Before: _____

After: _____

Time 2: _____

Before: _____

After: _____

Day: _____

Time 1: _____

Before: _____

After: _____

Time 2: _____

Before: _____

After: _____

Day: _____

Time 1: _____

Before: _____

After: _____

Time 2: _____

Before: _____

After: _____

Day: _____

Time 1: _____

Before: _____

After: _____

Time 2: _____

Before: _____

After: _____

Day: _____

Time 1: _____

Before: _____

After: _____

Time 2: _____

Before: _____

After: _____

CONTROLLED BREATHING LOG

Practice the breathing we learned in session today for 10 minutes twice a day. Write down each day and time that you practice. Bring this in with you to your next session.

Day: _____

Time 1: _____

Time 2: _____

Day: _____

Time 1: _____

Time 2: _____

Day: _____

Time 1: _____

Time 2: _____

Day: _____

Time 1: _____

Time 2: _____

Day: _____

Time 1: _____

Time 2: _____

Day: _____

Time 1: _____

Time 2: _____

Day: _____

Time 1: _____

Time 2: _____

☆ Mind-in-a-Jar Experiment ☆

Before you meditate, fill a glass jar with water. Look at it and think of how it's like your mind during a quiet moment—clean and clear, like the sky.

Now take a little bit of sand or soil that you've brought in from outside and dump it in the jar. Each tiny grain is one of your thoughts. Some are happy thoughts, some are sad, some are exciting wishes, some are dark and angry feelings.

Put a lid on the jar and shake it up, so that everything swirls around, faster and faster. This is your mind in a hurry.

Now, let everything calm down by letting the jar sit still on a table. This is your mind during meditation.

Watch the thoughts settle down to the bottom, leaving the water—your mind—light and clear, instead of dark and muddy. Now you can act peacefully, because you can think clearly!

