**Relaxation**

Relaxation techniques offer benefits such as reducing stress and tension in muscles, lowering blood pressure and heart rate, and creating internal coping skills to handle anxiety. Stress and anxiety can have a negative effect on the mental, physical, and emotional state of a person; at times, children can present with difficult to manage behaviours as a result of feeling out of control or unsettled.

When a stressor occurs, the internal nervous system will kick into action to protect us. This may include increased breathing rate, increased heart rate and possible presentation of emotional distress. The use of relaxation tools and strategies can help to reduce these automatic biological responses, and teach adaptive ways of managing these same stressors in future.

**Practical Ideas/Strategies**

* Breathing and stretching exercises – Support the area of your child’s body that require focus to tense and relax or stretch. You can use objects or visuals to support with breathing exercises (please see links below)
* Provide soft furnishings that will make your child feel comfortable, e.g. cushions on the floor, a dark den or pop up tent (you could create a make-shift den out of sheets and duvets!), etc.
* Provide a form of focus for your child to help them practice being mindful. This could include a bubble tube or lava lamp, blowing bubbles, using playdoh or Thera putty, listening to white noise or instrumental music, etc.
* Provide massage regularly – this could be in the form of deep pressure touch (see Sensory PBS Guides), or hand, head or foot massage (with or without cream), use of a head massager or roller (*please see links in resources for the body roller/head massager for purchase)*
* Consider use of established coping mechanisms that already work successfully, e.g. use of ear defenders, listening to music, watching favourite TV Programmes or YouTube videos, etc.
* Create time in a space which is free from stimulation – reduce all auditory and visual input where possible, e.g. turn off the TV and radio, close the windows and curtains etc.

**Online Resources / Videos**

* Targeted Support for Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs for Children (Essex County Council): [Ordinarily Available: Targeted Support](https://eycp.essex.gov.uk/media/2507/ordinarily-available-targeted-support-some-pupils-sept2023.pdf)
* Peace out guided relaxation for Kids: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBnPlqQFPKs>
* Calming Exercise for kids - Breathing and stretching: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyvuaL_2avY>
* Cbeebies. Techniques for keeping kids calm: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/joinin/seven-techniques-for-helping-kids-keep-calm>
* Calm Kids- Full body stretch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xELgfiXSw-s>
* Mindful looking: [Bubble Bounce! Mindfulness for Children (Mindful Looking)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEuFi9PxKuo)
* Practical strategies for parents: [237: Keeping Your Cool: Practical Strategies for Remaining Calm When Your Child Isn’t - Beautifully Complex](https://parentingadhdandautism.com/2023/10/237-keeping-your-cool/)
* Children’s relaxation activities to do at home: [Activities That Can Help to Calm Kids During Times of Anxiety | Save The Children](https://www.savethechildren.org/us/charity-stories/easy-at-home-relaxation-activities-to-help-calm-kids)
* Calming activities for disabled children: [Simple calming strategies for disabled children - Caudwell Children](https://www.caudwellchildren.com/simple-calming-strategies-for-disabled-children/)
* Sensory resources (Available to buy online for purchase): <https://www.exploreyoursenses.co.uk/classroom-organisers/calming-relaxation-sensory-resources.html>
* Build a relaxation kit – resources on Amazon (available to purchase online): [Amazon.co.uk : calm down kit](https://www.amazon.co.uk/s?k=calm+down+kit&adgrpid=1188572968506543&hvadid=74286013931214&hvbmt=be&hvdev=c&hvlocphy=69114&hvnetw=o&hvqmt=e&hvtargid=kwd-74285949696740%3Aloc-188&hydadcr=14880_2226126&mcid=5cb5372a4d7a3fa7811efe12322eb606&msclkid=2ecdf66c3043162e9cbb9ec28682f485&tag=mh0a9-21&ref=pd_sl_9623ylgf06_e)

**Links for Other “How To” Guides / Strategies**

* Yoga



* Mindfulness and Meditation



* Sensory Systems Theory

