



Breathing Techniques

Each Green Garden classroom utilizes breathing techniques during moments of high emotion and behavioral situations. These situations can be high stress, both for the teacher and child, but especially for the child as they are just learning how to manage emotions, solve problems, and work through difficult situations. When children feel unsafe, unloved, angry, scared, frustrated, etc. they enter a brain state that tells them to stay and fight or to run. These responses can look like not listening, running away from an adult, or acting out physically and emotionally. Our response to these behaviors as adults teaches children how to respond in situations that cause these types of behaviors. If we remain calm in these situations then the children in our care learn to react calmly in such situations. One way to calm ourselves and the child is to take three calming breaths to lower stress and get back into thinking about how to solve problems or deal with emotions rather than just react. When we are in control of our reactions they learn that they are safe and that there is no need to hide or react. By being calm children learn that we love them, no matter their behavior. Not only do we practice these breathing techniques but we teach them to the children in our classrooms. We practice breathing techniques when the children are calm so it is in their toolbox for easy recall for times when they are upset, just as we would practice a fire or tornado drill. Breathing techniques can be used with all ages at home and in the classroom. By using breathing techniques we help children, develop self-regulation, self-control, social-emotional learning, and emotional intelligence.

There are four main breathing techniques we utilize from Conscious Discipline, pretzel, drain, STAR, and balloon breathing. With older children you are able to pick interests that are specific to them and create your own breathing techniques. For example, if a classroom enjoys dragons they may breathe fire flames as they pretend to be a dragon. Below is the balloon breathing technique.

"Place your hands on top of your head and interlace your fingers. Breathe in through your nose and as you raise your arms, inflating an imaginary balloon. Release the air in the balloon by pursing your lips, exhaling slowly, lowering your arms and making a "pbpbpbpb" sound."

