

Sample Scripts for Controlled Breathing

Step 1: Explain rationale for breathing to child

"Today we're going to be learning a way to help ourselves calm down and control our nervous and upset feelings. I'm going to show you a special way of controlling the way you breathe that can really help you calm down and feel better. When you learn to control your breathing, you'll find that it's much easier to control your emotions and calm down. It's also something you can do anytime and anywhere. When you get good at it, we'll have you show your parent how to do it, too."

Step 2: Demonstrate proper body positioning

"OK, let's get in a comfortable position. Can you sit like I am? Now, put one of your hands here, right above your belly button, and the other up here on your chest."

Step 3: Demonstrate proper breathing technique

"Now, let's concentrate on our breathing. When we breathe in, the hand on our tummy should move up, and when we breathe out it should move down. The hand on our chest should stay still and not move the whole time. This means we are breathing correctly... Okay, now that you're getting the hang of it, let's try to breathe more slowly when we breathe out than when we breathe in. I'll count while we practice, and let's see if I can count higher when we're breathing out than when we're breathing in."

Step 4: Introduce relaxing word

"Now that we've learned the helpful, calming way to breathe, let's try to add a way to keep our thoughts and minds calm as we're breathing. You keep breathing like you are, but each time you breathe out, I want you to say the word 'Calm' to yourself. I want you to try to concentrate on the word calm. If you have other thoughts pop into your head besides 'calm,' try to picture them floating away with your breath as you exhale."

Step 5: Have the child demonstrate

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