

Breathing



Playing activities using the mouth can be beneficial to child development for many reasons.

Deep breathing can reduce tension in the body to support relaxation.

Engaging the lungs during whole body movement play, like singing/breathing/drinking water, can prevent children holding their breath, to ensure they get the calming benefit of the movement.

These games can encourage the development of oral-motor skills to support with feeding and tooth brushing. Games using the mouth can also reduce anxiety and build tolerance for putting food, cutlery and toothbrushes in the mouths.

Blowing activities can encourage children to understand sensations related to pushing for toileting.

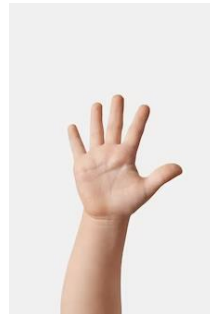
These games can strengthen mouth muscles, improve body awareness of where the muscles are in space, and build coordination of movements using the mouth for talking and playing.

Beginner:

For children who find it hard to take deep breaths or cannot yet blow, asking them to 'breathe' often doesn't help! They need to learn the concept, the motor control and develop the strength to focus their lungs and lips. These games are designed to build these abilities.



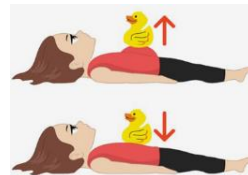
Play with bubbles:
The visual reward & immediate consequence helps develop understanding of the concept. If they can't blow yet, demonstrate and model. You can blow the bubbles for them, and have them try and blow them away in the air.








Wind on the Hands:
Play a game, blowing on each other's palm/hand. Talk about it, what does it feel like? If they close their eyes, can they tell when it happens? Talk about the wind being invisible and blowing the trees.








Hoberman Sphere Breathing:
Holding a Hoberman Sphere in hands to visualize the breathing movement. Open the sphere when breathing in and close the sphere when breathing out.






Flying Animals:
Have your child lay down on their back and put a stuffed animal on their belly. Have them breathe in and move the stuffed animal up, then breathe out and bring the stuffed animal back down.

	<p>Animal Sounds: Encourage a long exhale through animal noises, singing or humming. This naturally prompts a deeper inhale, extending the breath. Lion's roar, bee's buzz, dragon, bears grrrr. Add an arm or body movement, pretend to walk like the animal and copy a simple movement e.g. bees wings.</p>
	<p>Trees Blowing in the Wind: Pretend to be trees, stand up tall, arms waving, come around and blow on their arms and hands to create wind! Swap roles.</p>
	<p>Blowing Flowers: Go for a walk in the park and find a flower to blow the leaves from.</p>
	<p>Blowing Windmills: Make or buy a windmill to blow, talk about blowing it outside like the wind blows the grass or flowers in the park.</p>
	<p>Falling Waterfalls: Pouring light-weight food items from a cup into a tray, and blowing them as they fall. Watch what happens, do they move further away? Use a large tray to catch the mess!</p>

	<p>Blowing a paper mobile: You can make a paper mobile with your child and watch it moves when blowing.</p>
	<p>Be a detective: Hide a picture under a thin layer of flour and ask your child to blow and reveal what is underneath! Use a large tray to catch the mess!</p>
	<p>Little sailor: Make a little boat using a bottle lid and put it on a bowl of water. Ask your child to blow the boat to see where it sails.</p>
<p><u>Focused:</u></p> <p><i>For children who have the skills to take deep breaths, the following activities can build on their focus and control, by introducing 'tools' such as straws and party blowers.</i></p>	
	<p>Encourage drinking through a straw, to support the lip seal muscles to develop. Try wider straws, and thicker liquids to build sucking muscles.</p>

	<p>PomPoms Race: Blowing pom poms along a line or within a trail using a straw!</p>		<p>Bubble Volcano! Put a few drop of dish washing liquid in a bowl of water and use a straw to blow in the water to see how the bubbles come up! You can also add some food colouring in the water to make it colourful!</p>
	<p>Party Time: Use whistles, party blowers, khazoos, harmonicas. These will require a cleaning technique for health and safety, but are well worth the effort! Very motivating for children, and the sound/auditory feedback is very reinforcing reward for the consequences of blowing, which otherwise can be a very invisible and abstract concept!</p>		<p>Snowball challenge Use a straw to pick up a cotton wool ball by sucking it up from one bowl and move it to another bowl.</p>
<p><u>Out & About:</u></p> <p><i>For children who have the skills to take deep breaths and understand the concept, the following activities can help focus and create rhythm in breathing, without equipment. Consider printing out a poster for a classroom, having a child choose for the whole class and drawing this on the board at the beginning of the lesson. When out & about, talking about the shape, or showing a picture on a phone, can be a reminder of the breathing rhythm.</i></p>			
	<p>Football match! You can use a pom pom or a cotton wool ball as a football. You can also use tissue paper or tinfoil to make the football as well. Have a competition with your child and see who scores more goals!</p>		<p>Rainbow Breathing: start at one end, breathing deeply in move the finger along to trace the length of the rainbow, stop at the other side. Hold for a minute, then trace the finger back, breathing out slowly.</p>
	<p>Blow Painting: Using a straw to blow paint to make an artwork! Blow pens are another option as well.</p>		

	<p>Star Breathing: trace the picture in and out, tracking the breath.</p>
	<p>Hand Breathing Hold one palm out, with the pointer finger of the other hand, trace up and down, taking a breath in with the up and out with the down, tracing all the way from the base of the thumb to the little finger.</p>
	<p>Figure 8 Breathing Tracing the shape of a figure eight with your finger while breathing deeply. Trace one half of the eight as breathing in for three seconds then trace the other half of the eight as exhaling slowly for three seconds</p>