

Stress De-escalation Strategies

Pick a number

Sometimes it's helpful to focus on something simple, like counting. Have them pick a number and count to it. Or they could start with a random number, like 10, and count backwards down to one. Try a few different ways of counting to see which works best.

Take a deep breath

The key to a good deep breath is to have their belly move, not their chest. Have them put one hand on their belly and one hand on their chest. When they breathe in, their stomach should be moving out. And when they breathe out, their stomach should move in. Use props to make it more fun, like bubbles, a pinwheel, or laying down with a teddy bear on their stomach.

Imagine your favorite place

Have the child imagine their favorite place in the world. Maybe it's the beach, or the woods, or in a quiet spot in your classroom. Have them use their senses to think about this place- what do they see, hear, feel? Encourage them to stay there for a few minutes.

Picture Notes

Draw and write a note to help the child understand that I know he wants a turn and to remind him when he will have a turn or of expected behaviors. Post a notes work great, because they can be stuck wherever needed as a reminder. They let children know that they have been heard, give them a sense of control, and help them remember what's going to happen later in the day or week.