

# Teaching Kids about Stress

**Body Basics** - Help your child learn to recognize and identify changes that take place within his body when he is getting stressed. Help your child conduct a "body scan" to locate any areas of the body affected:

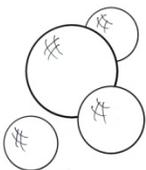
## Body Scan Checklist

- Forehead squinched up?
- Jaw tight?
- Shoulders up around the ears?
- Heart pounding?
- Butterflies in the belly?
- Hands shaking?
- Tight fists?



**Breathe** - Breathing is essential to helping ourselves find a place of calm. When we are stressed, we tend to breath shallow, and our breath is focused in our chest. When we are breathing fast it makes our whole body frustrated and difficult to do things. When we are breathing deep and relaxed, our whole body begins to feel relaxed and calm. Teach your child to breathe slowly in and out, blowing up his belly like a balloon.

## Bubble Breathing



This is a fun activity you can use to teach your child to take slow, deep breaths. First, have your child hold the wand in front of their lips and blow really hard. What was the result? A tiny bubble that popped immediately. Now, take a deep breath and blow slowly and steadily into the bubble wand. What happens now? A big bubble that hangs around for a while. Practice until you can consistently blow big, fat, lazy bubbles.

## Adjusting for Life: Stress management

---

**Be Aware** - When we are stressed, our thoughts tend to become negative, which just fuels the fire. Help your child learn to recognize thoughts like 'I can't stand this,' or, 'I can't take this.' Replace these "gasoline" thoughts with calming, affirming thoughts like:

- ✓ 'I can handle this.'
- ✓ 'I don't like this, but I will get through it.'
- ✓ 'I'll wait for this to pass, and I know it will.'

It may help to make a set of positive affirmation cards for your child. These visual reminders help "reprogram" negative thought patterns.

Remember, it takes awhile to learn a new behavior. Your child will need reminders, practice and support until these new skills take hold. Be patient. Practice the skills yourself and let your child hear you "share out loud" as you practice them.