



BEAR BELLY BREATHING

CASEL Competency

Self Management

SEL*f Component

Breath Awareness

Purpose

Calms the mind, relaxes the body, increases engagement.

Materials

A bear hat, puppet, or stuffed animal (Optional).

DESCRIPTION

1. Breathing Bears! Settle into a comfortable seated position on your bear tails.
2. Bring out your bear paws, and let me hear your big bear growls!
3. Now, silently place your bear paws on your big bear bellies. Focus your eyes on one point or gently close them.
4. Inhale, feeling your big bear bellies fill up with breath. Exhale, letting your bear air go.
5. Pay attention to your bear paws, as they move in and out with each bear belly breath.
6. Let's take one final collective bear belly breath together. Inhale, biggest breath of the day; exhale, let it go!
7. Slowly begin to wiggle your bear paws, open your eyes, and smile at your bear friends across the circle.

We are ready to learn, breathing bears!



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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How did bear belly breathing make you feel?

What was happening inside your body while you were bear belly breathing?

How can bear belly breathing help you in school?

When can you use this breath to help you feel calm and relaxed?

SENTENCE FRAMES

Bear belly breathing made me feel_____.

I was_____ when I was bear belly breathing.

Bear Belly breathing can help me in school_____.

I can use this breath when _____ to help me feel calm and relaxed.

PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRE-K – 1ST DIFFERENTIATION

The more enthusiastic and expressive you are during this breathing exercise, the more engaged your students will be! Students love when the teacher wears a bear hat during this practice (You can refer to yourself as “Breathing Bear”). You can also model this activity using a stuffed bear or puppet! The bear hat, puppet or stuffed animal will serve as a reminder for students that it is time to breathe!

2ND – 5TH DIFFERENTIATION

If older children find the bear aspect of the practice to be too childish, simply take it out and guide them through a basic “belly breathing” practice.

TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

Closing the eyes can be particularly triggering for students who have experienced trauma. To ensure all students feel safe, give them the option to either find a point to focus on or close their eyes.



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