

# Relax Kids Curriculum

creating calm confident kids

1. Movement
2. Mindful and Relaxation Games
3. Stretching
4. Peer Massage
5. Breathing
6. Affirmations/positive self talk
7. Mindfulness/Visualisation

★ **Movement** - incorporates dance and movement. Helps develop physical skills, improves coordination, boosts energy, increases oxygen flow, circulation and immune system and helps release endorphins.

★ **Mindfulness and Relaxation Games** - includes a range energetic, fun as well as relaxing games. Drama-based and thinking and social games are included. These help build children's confidence, social and communication skills. Games also helps develop their focus and concentration. Children develop their confidence taking turns to lead group games, or working in pairs. Children learn when to talk and when to listen to each other. Improvisation games help children learn how to respond creatively to new situations Children develop creative ways of expressing themselves, using mime, facial expression, movement and sound. Play is very important for long-term emotional health. Play has a natural anti-stress effect and releases opioids that promote positive powerful emotional states. Interactive play can enhance the regulation of emotions in the frontal lobe that can help children manage their feelings better.

★ **Stretching and Balance** - includes a set of stretches that help lengthen and stretch bodies so improving postural awareness. Simple exercises help children to identify and deal with their emotions constructively, while respecting other people's feelings and emotions at the same time. These exercises help release physical tension; develop motor skills, body awareness, balance and flexibility.

★ **Massage** - includes self and or peer massage (clothed massage with parental consent). Promotes positive touch and encourage respect, communication and empathy amongst peers. Children become aware of their bodies and learn to respect others. Positive touch boosts the immune system, calms the nervous system, helps the production of Oxytocin and Endorphins and lowers stress levels in children.

★ **Breathing** - includes a range of child friendly exercises that encourage deep breathing. These exercises help calm the nervous system and have an almost instant calming effect on children. Breathing exercises also improve concentration and focus. Deep breathing is essential in managing our automatic responses and allows us to access the thinking part of our brain. This is such an important skill that needs to be practiced on a daily basis and can have dramatic effects on our emotional state as it helps develop a more reflective attitude to our behaviour. Breathing helps tame the amygdala, which is the primitive part of the brain.

★ **Affirmations/Positive self-talk** - incorporates a range of games and circle time activities that help children to enjoy using positive affirmations and self-praise. These enjoyable exercises include the use of affirmation cards and help improve children's emotional health and literacy. Affirmations help children identify their strengths and help them set themselves achievable goals to improve their weaknesses. Affirmation exercises help boost children's self-esteem and identify personal qualities and achievements. Positive self-talk also re-programmes the brain and promotes positive thinking and develops self-confidence and self-esteem. They also encourage the release of endorphins as children think and speak positively. Every thought creates a neural pathway, the more that pathway is used the more automatic that pattern becomes. Positive self-talk helps retrain the brain and develop new neural pathways and encourage positive thinking.

★ **Mindfulness/Visualisation** - incorporates deep body relaxations, mindfulness exercises, guided imagery and visualisations. These lying down exercises help release physical and mental tension, lower blood pressure, increase body awareness and give children tools to cope with stress. Done regularly, these exercises can help relieve fatigue and promote deeper sleep while improving child anxiety. Exercises also improve concentration, listening skills, memory retention as well as develop imagination and creativity. Learning these skills has a direct impact pupils inner alarm system giving pupils response in stressful situations. When the inner alarm system is calm children can more easily access the executive brain (thinking part of our brain) and so can respond rather than react to life events.

MOVE

PLAY

STRETCH

FEEL

BREATHE

BELIEVE

RELAX