

DE-ESCALATION TOOLKIT

10 Techniques to Calm Kids



Welcome to the De-Escalation Toolkit!

Every child experiences moments of big emotions, frustration, anxiety, or simply feeling overwhelmed.

This toolkit offers 10 simple, effective techniques designed to help children find calm, regain control, and build self-soothing skills.

Each activity is easy to practice anywhere, whether at home, in the classroom, or on the go.

These strategies empower kids to tune into their feelings and practice mindfulness, encouraging a calm reset whenever they need it.

Use these exercises together or let children try them independently as they grow.

Let's get started on a path to calm, confident moments!



Balloon Breathing

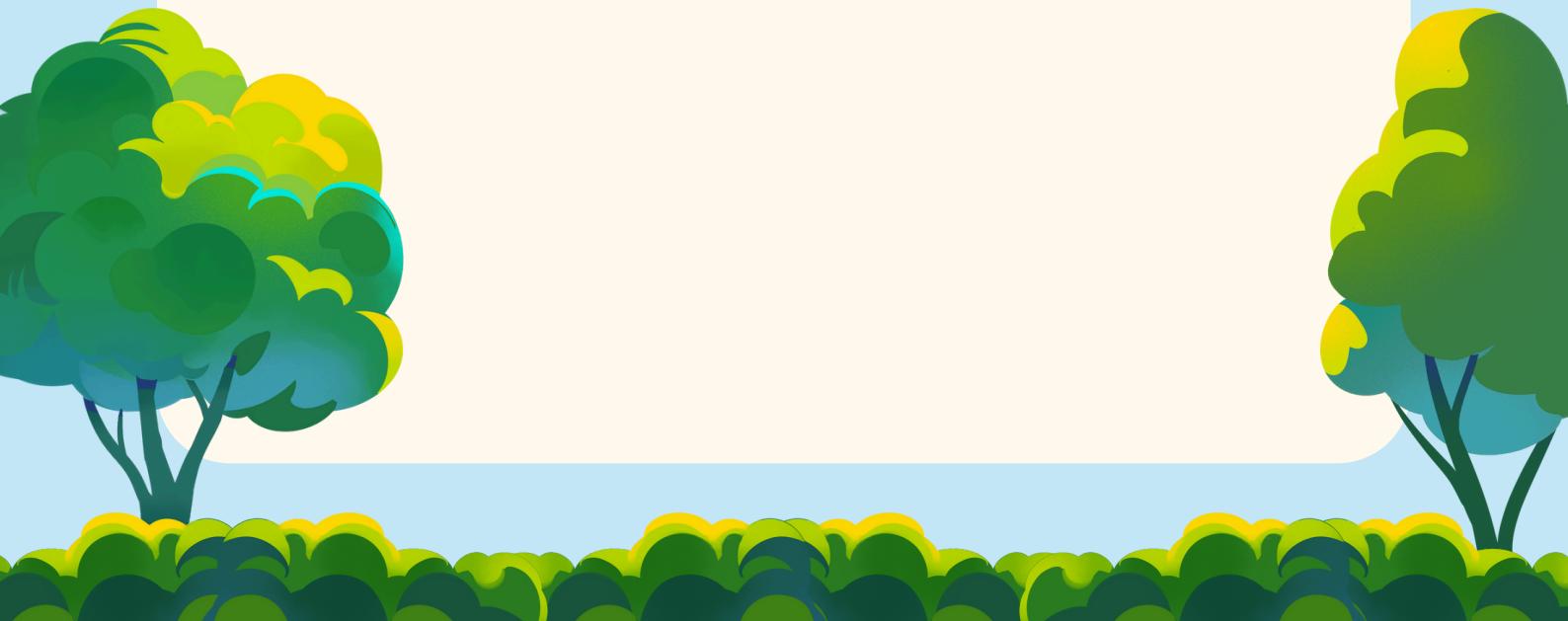
How It Works: Imagine you're blowing up a big balloon. Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose, filling your belly with air like you're filling the balloon.

Then, slowly breathe out through your mouth, like you're gently letting the air out of the balloon.

Why It Helps: Deep breathing slows the heart rate and calms the body, making it easier to feel relaxed and in control.

Try This: Close your eyes and imagine the color of your balloon. With each breath, picture it getting bigger and brighter.

When you breathe out, imagine releasing any stress or worry into the balloon as it floats away.





5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

How It Works: This technique helps kids focus on their senses to bring them back to the present moment.

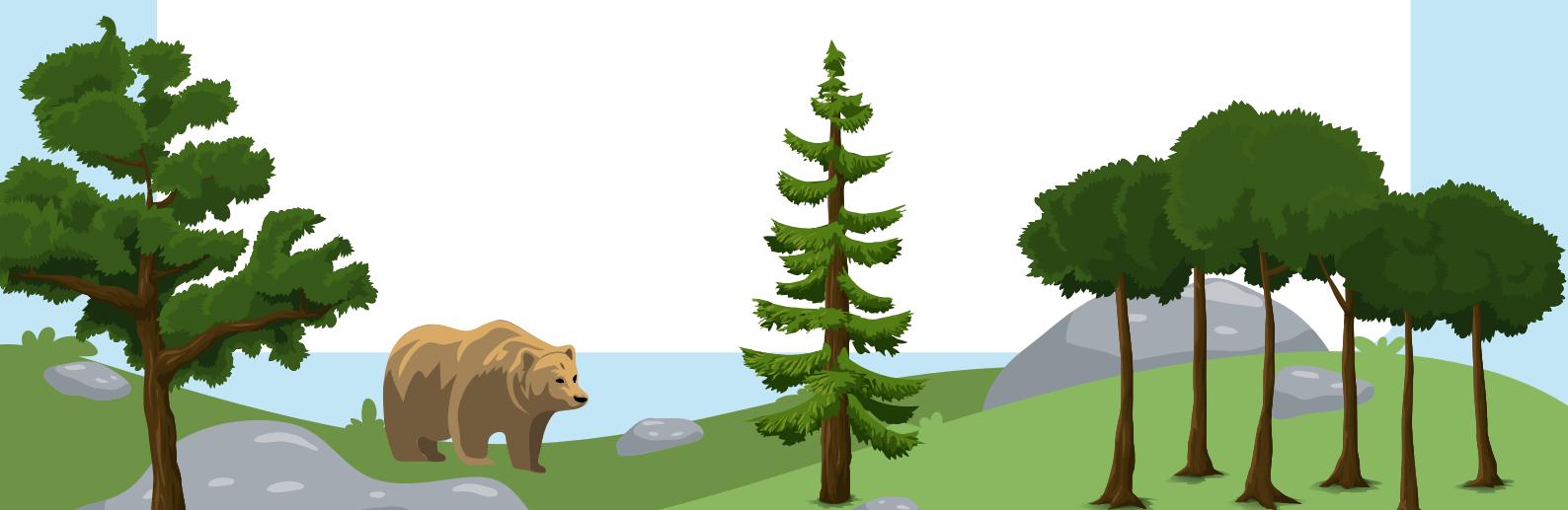
By noticing specific things around them, they become more grounded and calm.

Why It Helps: Engaging the senses redirects attention away from overwhelming feelings, creating a sense of calm and stability.

Try This: Look around and name:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

Take it slow, paying close attention to each sense, noticing how this helps you feel more in control.



Tree Root Visualization

How It Works: Imagine your feet growing strong roots that extend deep into the ground, just like a tree.

Feel the roots anchoring you, making you steady and unmovable.

Why It Helps: Visualizing stability helps kids feel grounded and secure, reducing feelings of anxiety or restlessness.

Try This: Stand tall with your feet firmly on the ground. Close your eyes, and picture thick roots growing from the bottoms of your feet, reaching down into the earth.

With each breath, feel yourself becoming stronger and more connected to the ground.

Bumblebee Buzz

How It Works: Take a deep breath in, then hum or make a gentle buzzing sound as you exhale. The vibration helps relax the body, while the sound provides a soothing distraction.

Why It Helps: The gentle buzzing activates calming parts of the nervous system, which can help reduce stress and bring a sense of peace.

Try This: Sit comfortably and place your hands gently over your ears. Take a deep breath in, and as you breathe out, make a “bzzz” sound like a bumblebee.

Feel the vibration in your face and chest, letting it calm and relax you. Repeat a few times, focusing on the sound and sensation.

Hand Tracing

How It Works: Use one hand to trace the outline of the other, slowly breathing in and out as you move along each finger.

This activity combines touch and focus, helping kids calm down by engaging both the mind and body.

Why It Helps: The combination of breathing and tactile movement brings attention to the present moment, easing anxious thoughts and promoting relaxation.

Try This: Hold up one hand with fingers spread. With the other hand, start at the base of your thumb, slowly trace up the side as you breathe in, and trace down the other side as you breathe out.

Move to the next finger and repeat until you've traced the whole hand. Focus on each breath and each movement to help bring a sense of calm.



Color Hunt

How It Works: Look around and find as many items as you can of a specific color. Focusing on this "hunt" can shift attention away from stressful thoughts and bring calm through mindful observation.

Why It Helps: By concentrating on finding colors in the environment, kids redirect their thoughts, easing anxiety and bringing their attention to the present moment.

Try This: Pick a color, like blue, and look around for everything you can see in that color. Name each item quietly or count them as you go.

If you're feeling calmer, try a different color. This hunt helps clear your mind and bring peace through focused attention.

Feather Breathing

How It Works: Imagine you're holding a feather in front of you. Take a gentle breath in, then slowly breathe out, as if you're trying to keep the feather floating in the air without letting it fall.

Why It Helps: This technique encourages slow, controlled breathing, which helps the body relax and reduces feelings of stress or anxiety.

Try This: Picture a small, light feather floating in front of you. Inhale deeply, then exhale slowly and softly, as if you're blowing on the feather to keep it floating gently.

Repeat a few times, noticing how calm and steady your breathing becomes.

Squeeze and Release

How It Works: Tense up different muscle groups in your body, hold for a few seconds, then release. This practice helps release physical tension, allowing kids to feel more relaxed.

Why It Helps: This technique helps kids become aware of where they're holding tension and teaches them how to relax their muscles intentionally, promoting a calm body and mind.

Try This: Start by squeezing your hands into tight fists, hold for a count of three, then release. Move to other parts of your body, like your shoulders, arms, and legs, repeating the squeeze-and-release action.

Focus on the feeling of relaxation each time you let go.



Imaginary Hot Cocoa

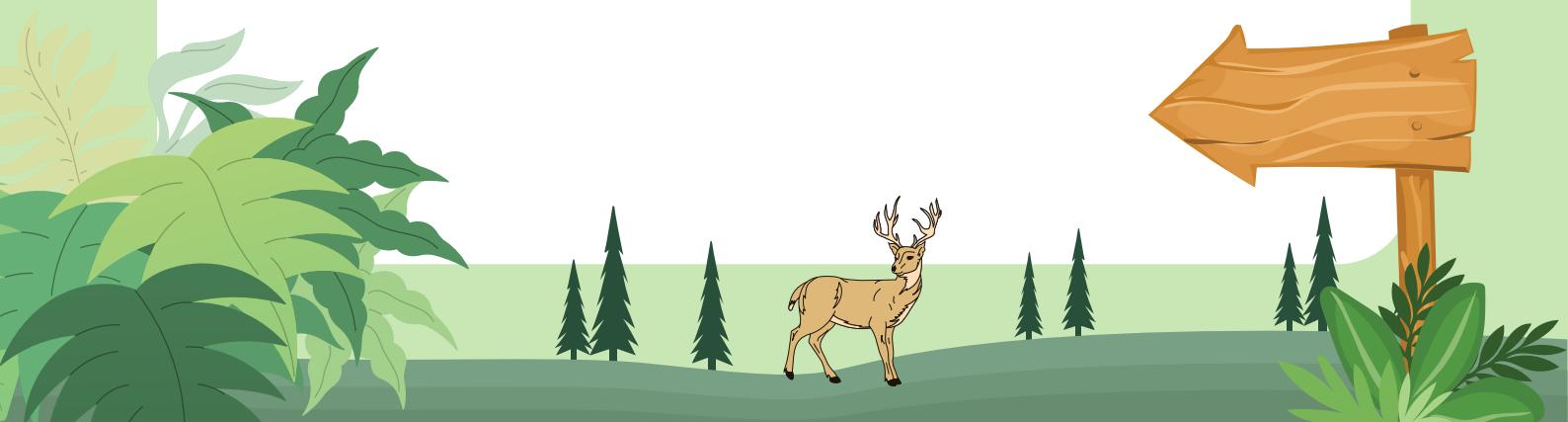
How It Works: Pretend you're holding a cup of hot cocoa. Breathe in deeply to "smell" the cocoa, then breathe out slowly to "cool" it down.

This visualization combines calming breathing with a comforting image.

Why It Helps: The comforting imagery and slow breathing help kids relax, focusing their attention on the soothing action of "cooling" the cocoa.

Try This: Hold your hands like you're cradling a warm cup of cocoa. Breathe in slowly, imagining the delicious smell, then breathe out slowly to "cool" it down.

Repeat a few times, noticing how warm and calm you feel.





Cloud Watching

How It Works: Imagine any worries or tense feelings floating away like clouds in the sky. Visualizing these clouds moving away helps kids release their stress and find calm.

Why It Helps: This exercise encourages letting go of worries, allowing kids to focus on a peaceful, calming image that promotes relaxation.

Try This: Close your eyes and picture a big, blue sky. Imagine each worry as a small cloud floating above.

Watch as each cloud drifts away, carried by a gentle breeze. Take a deep breath and let any remaining worries float away with the clouds.

