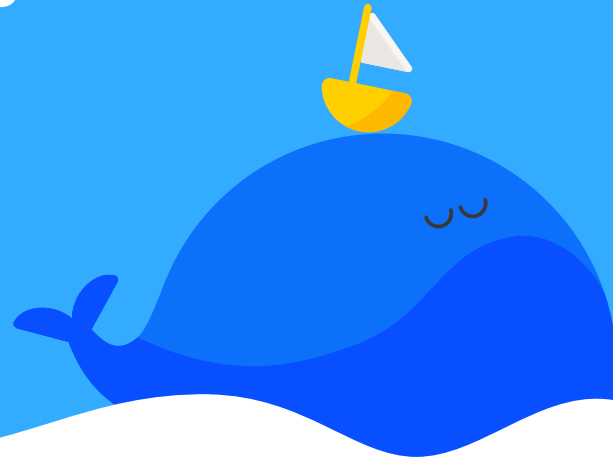


Working (and parenting) from home

Managing your workload from home and keeping little ones occupied is a challenging adjustment. When times get tough, restless, or a little bit boring, try our recommended mindful exercises and games for kids.



For the senses:

Taking in our surroundings through all 5 senses helps us calm the mind and experience our space in a new way.

1. Guess what?

Fill a paper bag with mystery items and take turns feeling one object at a time. Guess what they are as you describe the texture and shape.

2. Never seen before:

Look around the room for one minute (in silence) and point out all the things you've never noticed before.

3. Slow-mo snacking:

At snack time, take small bites. Eat slowly, using all 5 senses to describe the experience. What does it taste like? How does it smell? Does it make a sound?

4. I spy with my little nose:

Go through different rooms in the house, and outside if you can, noticing subtle scents that you don't normally pay attention to.

5. Radio silence:

Set a timer for one minute and count how many different sounds you can hear as you sit with your eyes closed. Share what you heard with each other.

For tough moments:

Try an exercise to help kids find the positive in any situation.

Okay, good: When something goes "wrong" during the day, practice responding with "Okay, good!" and consider the flipside. For example, if you don't manage to get to a certain activity or game, say "Okay, good! At least we got to have our favorite snack together." There's always a reason to stay optimistic.

For bedtime:

Trouble winding down? Help kids release energy and tension with a relaxing sensory exercise.

Squeeze and release:

Lie down with your eyes closed and take a big, deep breath – in through the nose, and out through the mouth.

1. Wiggle and squeeze the different parts of your body, starting with the feet and hands. Squeeze them as tight as you can for a count of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 – then relax. Allow the hands and feet to sink down.
2. Next, squeeze the arms and legs as hard as you can for a count of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 – then relax.
3. Repeat this throughout the body, squeezing your muscles and letting the tension go as you feel your body sink down.
4. Imagine you're on a soft pillow, and with the body feeling heavy, close your eyes and rest.

For sharing our feelings:

Challenging feelings aren't always easy for kids to explain. This exercise can help you talk through them and understand what's going on.

The guard dog and the owl: An analogy of the guard dog and the owl can help kids make sense of their feelings by explaining how our brains work. The guard dog (the amygdala) protects us from danger, while the wise owl (the prefrontal cortex) calms our fears and worries, and helps us see the bigger picture.

Ask kids the question: "What is our wise owl saying about what's going on? What about the guard dog?"

For boredom:

More time at home invites some restlessness. Try these exercises in cultivating curiosity.

- Get curious together about what boredom feels like, by identifying the sensations it brings. Share these feelings with each other: is it frustration? Worry? Antsiness?
- Write a list of 10 things you'd each love to do, however realistic or unrealistic they might be.

For staying on task:

Creating a home-schooling routine is tough, let alone sticking to it. Dedicated breaks create a sense of accomplishment and make focus-time more intentional. If you can, set a timed break every 20-30 minutes to practice this exercise.

STOP:

- S** Stop your study-time for a moment
- T** Take five big, deep breaths
- O** Observe your experience and how your body feels. Are you tense or relaxed?
- P** Proceed with your schoolwork or whatever's next on the agenda