

Focused Attention Techniques

Peer Appreciation

Invite children to note a few words or images that they want to share with a peer they appreciate. As they put their words or images on paper, encourage them to breathe deeply and think about the person. Do this for at least one minute. Afterward, encourage them to share their words or images with their focus person.

Shared Concerns

Ask children to write or draw something that worries them on a piece of paper and then fold and exchange papers with a partner. As they hold the folded pieces of paper, have them take deep breaths together and let them out, repeating for at least one minute. As they breathe in each time, have them focus on taking in strength and love from the other person. As they breathe out, have them focus on sending strength and love to the other person. (An alternative approach is to have partners unfold the papers and breathe together while imagining support moving from each to the other for their specific need.)

Shared Vision

Encourage children to focus their attention on one specific object in their location. Tell them to gaze at the object for 30-45 seconds and then, when you give a soft signal, to slowly open up their view to include the area around the object and other people in the room. By the time they widen their gaze, their heart rate, respirations, and blood pressure will be lower and they will take in more details about their environment and companions.