



Rooted in Language

Webinars **Rooted in**

with Joy Martin

Children's Emotional Response to Learning Struggles

This resource accompanies the following webinar:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uB65x9SS3Q&t=1s>

Helpful Tools for Positive Learning Experiences

Be courageous; try something new and different.

What worked one day may not work the next day. Children and adults are constantly changing, growing, and emerging. If it works, great! If it doesn't work—troubleshoot, troubleshoot, troubleshoot, and try again (Grandin & Cutler, 2017; Shore, 2018).

HALT—Avoid learning activities when your child is: Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired

Implement reading, writing, and learning activities at a child's best time of day. Learning to read and write is hard; it is counterproductive and stressful for a child to read, write, and comprehend under such physical and emotional demands. Do your best to equate 'learning' with positivity, enjoyment, and fun. Avoid and quickly 'HALT' negative learning experiences. Remember: Neurons that fire together wire together. –Donald Hebb

Perform a sensory audit of the environment.

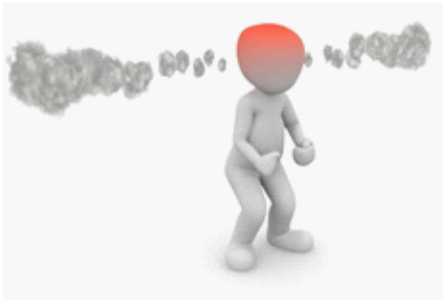
"School years are easier when your child's senses are happy" (Collins & Olson, 2012, p. 1). Is the environment conducive to your child's sensory needs and learning capacity? Sensory factors can distract and inhibit children in learning experiences.

Thing to consider:

- lighting (avoid florescent lights)
- sounds (buzzing lights, ticking clocks, tone of voice from parent/teacher)
- smells
- textures of objects utilized when learning
- taste/texture of snack preferences
- seating, posture, and positions when learning
- other household activities that could distract children in learning

Lastly, is there a sense of emotional and physical safety?
(Olson & Collins, 2012; Sensory World, 2018; Shore, 2018)

Identify and diminish stress responses: Fight • Flight • Flee • Freeze



Fight



Flight



Flee



Freeze

Implement mindfulness practices:

- Belly Breathing puts the brake on the body's stress response.
(see exercises below)
- When calm, practice 'moments' of stillness and quiet.
(5 seconds to 5+ minutes)
- Physical Exercise: Implement frequent breaks that involve creative physical activities.
- Therapeutic Movement—simple yoga moves for kids.
- Utilize mindful breathing exercises in place of 'time-out' to effectively calm your child.
(Collins, 2012; 2015; 2018)

Calming Strategies:

(Collins, 2012, 2018)

- Breathing deeply
(mindful breathing—explained in depth on page 5)
- Drinking through a straw
(forces breath)
- Sucking on hard candy
(hits the reward center of the brain)
- Taking a break
(physical activity/exertion -or- stillness and breathing -or- creative fun)
- Lowering the lights
- Listening to calm music
- Taking a warm bath
- Talking in a soft, calm voice
- Rocking/swinging slowly
(linear)
- Chewing gum
(or oral sensory chew toys)
- Applying deep pressure
(hugs, weighted vests, weighted blankets)
- Using Weighted Stuffed Animals
(weighted puppy around neck/weighted gecko on lap. Weighted animals can be purchased off Amazon)

Mindful Breathing Exercises:

(Collins, 2015; 2018)

Operational Definition of Mindfulness:

Awareness that arises from paying attention in the present moment. (Kabat-Zinn, 2017)

Breathing Exercises by Britt Collins, MS, OTR/L

Belly Breathing stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, which puts the brake on the body's stress response. Enjoy some of these fun breathing exercises with your kids:



5 Mindful Breaths (Use 5 fingers and/or breathing ball)

Hold left hand in the air; use right index finger to trace thumb and fingers on left hand starting at the base of thumb near wrist. Slowly and deeply inhale through your nose as you trace upward on side of thumb; exhale through mouth as you trace down the other side of thumb. Inhale through nose as you trace upward on side of left index finger; exhale through mouth as you trace down the other side of left index finger. Repeat for remaining fingers.

NOTE: You can also use a breathing ball for this exercise; deeply inhale through nose while outwardly expanding the breathing ball with your hands; exhale through mouth while contracting the breathing ball.



Sssss Breath (Snake Breath)

Deeply inhale through your nose; place your tongue to the roof of your mouth and exhale very slowly, making an extended 'hisssssss' sound for as long as you can. Repeat exercise until you feel calm.



Bumblebee Breath

Deeply inhale through your nose; lightly press lips together and exhale, making a humming/buzzing sound with your lips. You should feel a slight tickle or vibration in your lips. Repeat exercise until you feel calm.



HA Breath (Volcano Breath)

Deeply inhale through your nose; then open your mouth and forcefully make a 'HA' sound, forcing out all the air from deep in your belly. Repeat 3 to 5 times. Rest and repeat again when feeling stressed, frustrated, or angry. The Volcano Breath is a cleansing breath, ridding the body of toxins.

Visuals can also help children learn how to belly breath; try some of these fun activities:

- Breathing on a Mirror:
Deeply inhale; exhale on mirror, use your finger to write on the mirror.
- Cotton Ball Race:
Deeply inhale, then blow cotton balls across the table with straws.
- Blow Out Candles:
Deeply inhale and blow out the candles (adult supervision required).
- Blow Bubbles with bubble wand:
DIY Bubble recipes online.

Additional Helpful Resources

California Department of Education. (2017). California Dyslexia Guidelines [Informative PDF Document on Dyslexia]. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ac/documents/cadyslexiaguidelines.pdf>

Collins, B. (2007). OT for Children with Autism, Special Needs, & Typical [DVD]. Arlington, TX: Sensory World. Purchase at: <https://sensoryworld.com/product-category/dvds/>

Collins, B. (2007). OT in the Home [DVD]. Arlington, TX: Sensory World. Purchase at: <https://sensoryworld.com/product-category/dvds/>

Collins, B. (2007). OT in the School [DVD]. Arlington, TX: Sensory World. Purchase at: <https://sensoryworld.com/product-category/dvds/>

Greenland, S. K. (2016). Mindful games: Sharing mindfulness and mediation with children, teens, and families. Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

Greenland, S. K. & Harris, A. (2017). Mindful games activity cards: 55 fun ways to share mindfulness with kids and teens. Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

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- Collins, B. & Olson J. L. (2012). *Sensory Parenting: The Elementary Years*. Arlington, TX: Sensory World of Future Horizons.
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- Sensory World (2018). *The World Leader for Sensory Resources and Products* [Website]. Arlington, TX: Retrieved from <https://sensoryworld.com>
- Shore, S. (2018). *Senses and Sensibilities: An Inside View on Sensory Issues and Developing Easy to Implement Solutions* [PP Presentation]. Kansas City Autism Conference, February 16, 2016 by Future Horizons: Arlington, TX.