



FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL



BOOKS

- Books are great because they are walking kids through what is going to happen in a fun, creative and visual way. With children it's the fear of not knowing what's ahead or not being able to picture what is going to happen that causes the fear. That's why picture books and visualisation exercises are fantastic tools to help ease your child into their first day at school.



Great for shy or anxious little ones



Brilliant for jealousy & focusing on what we have/gratitude



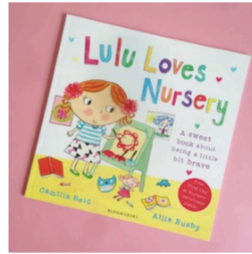
Great for shy, nervous kids or kids who don't like change



Walking kids through school and the nerves they might have



Brilliant, fun book about friendships and the importance of inclusion



Lovey one for kids starting creche.



Fun, vibrant book that walks kids through what a school day may look like.



Fantastic book on what is friend and how we make friends.

BREATHING

- Breathing is really important for everyone but especially important for anxious or worried people. When we start to worry our brains think that we are under threat (even though it could be a worry about something small or trivial) and it sends a message to our body to get ready to fight or run. Long ago our ancestors had much more immediate and real threats such as coming upon large and hungry animal, they had to decide between staying and fighting or fleeing. Hence the name fight or flight. Even though thankfully we don't have to run for our lives today, our brains still have the same reaction to perceived danger.



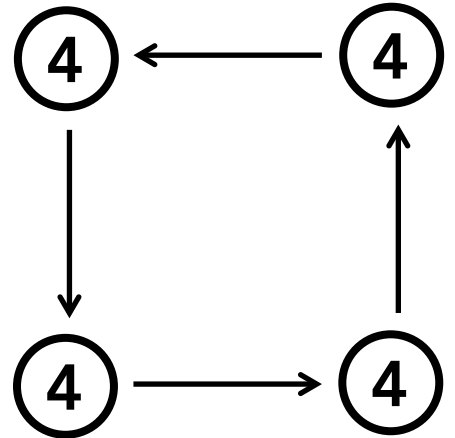
Image cbt4panic.org

- Taking big deep and slow breaths triggers our parasympathetic nervous system which is the opposite of fight or flight. It's our rest and digest mode and it allows our body to relax and feel safe once again.

BREATHING EXERCISES:

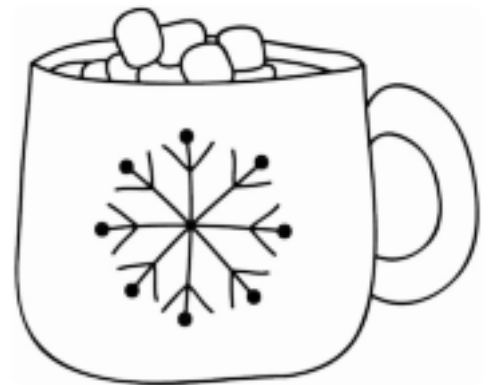
Box Breathing:

- Breathe in for 4,
- Hold for 4
- Breathe out for 4
- Hold for 4



Hot Chocolate Breathing:

- Ask your child to pretend that they are holding a lovely mug of steaming hot chocolate (with marshmallows)
- It's too hot to drink so ask your child to take a big deep breath and then blow out the breath slowly on the hot chocolate.
- Repeat this four times



AFFIRMATIONS

Our little ones might feel nervous or anxious about starting school. It's a big change. It's a lot for them to process.

Affirmations are great for building up that little bit of confidence and for putting them into a place of gratitude making it easier for them to be positive.

Repeating positive statements like these affirmations below has been shown to basically rewire the brain. We can train our brains to help us feel more confident, positive and strong.

These are suggestions but you can make up your own positive statements. You can also make it into a game with actions or sing and dance your affirmations. The most important thing here is repetition.

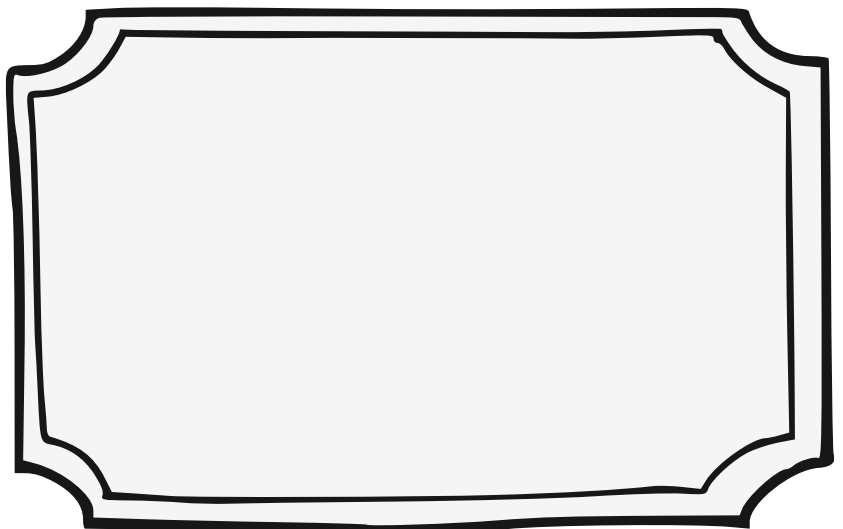
- **I am kind, clever and strong.**
- **I feel confident, safe and loved.**
- **Each day I am learning and growing.**
- **Everything is going to be okay.**
- **I enjoy going to school and learning new things.**
- **I am a good friend.**

GRATITUDE

Gratitude helps us to look at what we HAVE in our life rather than the lack of it. Our thoughts help to shape our brain. It can make the difference between reaching for a negative thought or a positive thought. The more we practise seeing the good in life, the more good we see in our lives.

How can kids get involved?

- Make a family gratitude jar and every day get the family to write or draw something that they are grateful for and put it in the jar. You can then read them out at dinner or before bed. Below is a label to decorate and put on the jar.
- Help your kids keep a gratitude journal where they draw things that they are grateful to have in their life.
- Do the Five Finger exercise like in Niall Breslin's book 'Take Five'. Get your child to hold up one hand and list five things that they are happy to have in their lives. As they say one they put a finger down.



MEDITATION



Guided meditations and visualisations are fantastic for getting children relaxed and in a lovely calm space before they go to sleep. There are some great options on YouTube such as Cosmic Kids Yoga or there are books and CD's like Relax Kids. There are even some for little ones on Headspace if you have the app.

DRAW IT OUT

Another great one for kids is to literally get a big sheet of paper and draw it out. You don't have to be a great artist for this just sketch some stick men and put names under them. Draw the school, the teacher, the classroom, your child and lots of friends. Fill the page with colour. Anything to help them get a visual idea of what is to come. It will really help them with getting into the feeling of going to school.



