



THE READY TO

REGULATE TOOLKIT

10 EASY TO IMPLEMENT YOGA AND MINDFULNESS
ACTIVITIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD AND BEYOND

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Zensation Kids
breath • movement • mindfulness

Struggling with managing your students' behavior, attention and emotions?

Empower them with these quick-acting tools to improve their ability to **cope, calm and be kind** (to themselves and others)

TOOLS TO:



BECOME **CALM**



FOCUS ATTENTION



BOOST **CONFIDENCE**



RELEASE ANGER



RADIATE KINDNESS



SUCCEED TOGETHER

Classrooms that **practice these strategies together**, as a community, tend to be able to maintain and sustain a calmer, more focused environment which supports learning and living in harmony throughout the day.

Each time you and your students practice achieving a calm sense of being, a moment of clear focus and awareness of your emotional state, the nervous system relaxes, organizes and rewires itself. The more often you offer opportunities to practice the tools below, the easier it is for the nervous system to shift into a relaxed, peaceful mode. This is where **learning happens**. This is where **joy resides**. This is where **“appropriate behavior” flourishes**.

Each practice can be short, lasting only 1-2 minutes. YES, it is that quick to create an internal shift. When you consistently practice these tools a few times per day for a minute or two, you will discover the most transformative method of creating lasting change of behavior, attention and resilience. YES, this is powerful stuff!!!!

Here are a few practices you can share individually with a student, or with your entire class.

A few small notes:

Many of these practices can be done with the eyes closed. I suggest you offer that as an option. If they choose to keep their eyes open, that is fine as well.

Following each practice, provide a moment of stillness. You can say, “Before we complete our practice, take a moment and notice how you feel.” You may decide you wish to go around the room and ask each student how they feel. This is a great way to bring some emotional and social skills into your lesson.



BECOME CALM

Have you ever noticed that the calmer you (personally) feel, the more pleasant and easeful, your day tends to flow? In a calm state, you carry peacefulness within you and you have a greater capacity to share that state with those around you. Things that might get you upset and agitated, fall off your shoulders with greater ease.

For our students, **creating an inner sense of calm and peace allows them to build resilience.**

Balloon Breath– Sitting up straight or lying down on the floor, place your hands on your belly. Imagine there is a balloon inside your belly. As you breathe in through your nose, the air fills your belly, making your balloon bigger and bigger. Once it becomes as big as it can be, slowly let the air out by breathing through your nose. As you do, you will feel your belly balloon get smaller and smaller. Repeat this at least 5 times.

Helpful HINT – Encourage breathing in and out through the nose. This is a more calming breathing pattern. Sometimes when we breathe in through our nose and out through our mouth, we tend to exhale a greater amount of air than we are taking in when we inhale. This causes imbalance and disorganization within the nervous system. When we are stressed, we mostly breathe through our mouth and this becomes a predominant habit. So nasal breathing should be practiced for ourselves and our students in order to counteract the effects of stress.



Turtle Pose– Sit on your heels and gently place your forehead on the floor. Stretch your arms in front of you, resting on the floor. Take in a few long deep breaths. Breathe in through the nose and out through the nose. Imagine you are a turtle hiding in your shell. As you breathe in, the breath makes the shell on your back as strong as armor. As you breathe out, you let all your worries dive into the earth. Can you take 5 big calming breaths in this pose?



FOCUS ATTENTION

Focus is like a muscle in the mind. Just like any other muscle in your body, the more you practice using it, the stronger it becomes.

Tree Pose – Stand tall and feel both of your feet against the floor. Imagine you are a big tall tree with roots that dive into the earth. Feel the top of your head reaching up towards the sun. We are going to grow our tree but we want our tree to be steady and strong. We use our eyes to help keep us balanced. Look at something that is not moving (Here it is helpful to direct students where they should focus their eyes. It is helpful to point out specific pictures you already have hanging on the wall in your room). Keep your eyes focused on that one picture and don't let them get distracted and move. Your eyes will help to keep your tree steady. Bring your palms together in the middle of your body. Take a deep breath in and out as we get ready to grow. Slowly lift one foot off of the floor and place that foot against your standing calf (you may need to give them a little anatomy lesson here). Can we balance our tree here for 3 deep breaths? Count them for your class and pace them slowly. Try the other side.



Feather Dance – I am sure you have some fluffy feathers around. Each child will need one that they can hold by the bottom pointy spine. We want to make sure to hold our feathers tight so they don't get blown away. Now hold the feather in front of your face so that you can continue to look at it with both eyes. Don't let your eyes wander, keep watching your feather and see how you can make it dance. Take a big breath in through your nose. As slowly as possible, exhale the air through your pursed lips. Try to make the fluffy sides of the feather DANCE, using only your breath. Can you make it dance for a long time? The bigger you inhale through your nose, the longer you will be able to make it dance.

Helpful HINT – If your students begin to enjoy letting go of the feather as they blow, don't get upset that they are not "following the directions." You can turn this into another fun activity that also encourages focusing skills.

Here are a few options:

- Have them blow the feather in the air and then try to catch it in their hands before it falls to the floor.
- Have them sit facing a partner. Using only 1 of the feathers, have them blow the feather to their partner. The partner then tries to catch it before it falls to the floor.

Add a bit of kindness to the game. Each time they breathe in, have them think of a kind word, such as "strong." Have them imagine that they are breathing in "strong" and then sending it with the feather. In the first adaptation, they are sending "strong" back to themselves. In the second adaptation, they are sending it to their partner. Each time the feather is blown into the air, think of a different word such as, "love, peace, joy, and safety."



BOOST CONFIDENCE

The development of inner confidence creates appropriate outer action and behavior. These tools help students to feel their inner power.

Super Power Breath – Ready to boost your power? Stand with your feet a little bit apart. With a strong and quick breath in, reach your arms up to the sky. Imagine that you are grabbing the power of lightning from the sky. Pull that energy back to you by fisting your hands and pull your arms down to your sides. As you do, exhale through your mouth with a powerful, “HA.” Repeat this power breath 10 more times.



Wise Warrior – To get into your warrior pose; stand with your feet apart (greater than the width of your hips). Turn the toes of one foot out to the side. Bend that knee while you keep your other knee straight. Inhale your arms straight out to the side (they should be parallel to the floor). Take a deep breath in and let’s say some things to remind us of how awesome we are. Repeat affirmations either out loud, as a quiet whisper or silently to yourself such as, “I am strong, I am proud, I am safe. I am brave.” What else can you think of that makes you feel good?

Now strike your warrior pose in the other direction.



RELEASE ANGER

Everything anyone does, is an effort to try to make themselves feel better (whether they realize it or not). Sometimes the actions and behaviors of our students are merely reflecting how they feel inside and are their attempt to try to move to a better feeling place. With these tools, we empower them to use their breath and their body to shift anger, rather than screaming, tantruming, throwing, biting.....



Dragon Breath – When you are really angry and hurt, it can feel like there is a fire building up inside your belly. Sometimes you are ready to explode. Don't keep that fire inside your body. It's good to let it out and release the sensation of those angry feelings. Let's imagine we are dragons with hot fire in our belly. Take a deep breath in through your nose. Fill your belly and your chest with air. When you are ready to exhale, open your mouth. Stick your tongue out as far as you can (yes, here it is OK). Breathe the fire out with a great big, "ROAR."

Dragon's Cave Pose – Sometimes just the breath won't do. You need to get into the dragon's cave and release the fire within. Place your hands and knees on the floor, like you are a cat. Push into your hands and feet, straightening your knees (you become an upside, down "V"). Now breathe like a dragon while holding the cave pose or simply take 5 deep, long, slow breaths.





RADIATE KINDNESS

Rainbow Meditation – Place one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly. Closing eyes is optional.

Imagine there is a beautiful rainbow floating over your head. Can you see all of the colors? There are red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple arches over your head.

Take a big breath in and imagine that the red color of the rainbow fills your whole body. As you breathe out, say to yourself, "**May I be safe.**"

Take a big breath in and imagine that the orange color of the rainbow fills your whole body. As you breathe out, say to yourself, "**May I be happy.**"

Take a big breath in and imagine that the yellow color of the rainbow fills your whole body. As you breathe out, say to yourself, "**May I be strong.**"

Take a big breath in and imagine that the green color of the rainbow fills your whole body. As you breathe out, say to yourself, "**May I be loved.**"

Take a big breath in and imagine that the blue color of the rainbow fills your whole body. As you breathe out, say to yourself, "**May I be honest.**"

Take a big breath in and imagine that the purple color of the rainbow fills your whole body. As you breathe out, say to yourself, "**May I remember I am awesome.**"

Here is a variation of this meditation to send kindness to others.

Think of someone you would like to send some kind thoughts to. Picture them in your mind. Imagine that there is a beautiful rainbow floating over their head. Can you see all of the colors? There are red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple arches over their head.

Take a big breath in and imagine that the red color of the rainbow fills their whole body. As you breathe out, say to yourself, "**May YOU be safe.**"

Continue with the script above, changing the "I" to "you."



I hope this brings peace and joy to the children you work with, or live with, as well as for you personally. Please remember to use these tools for yourself. The work of an educator or parent is hard. We need tools to fill up our own cup of calm, compassion, patience and resilience. It is work. It takes practice to do this for yourself. We are so used to being in service of others.

If no one has said this to you today, "You are awesome. You have the power to be the light for so many other lives, but that by no way means you should diminish and deplete your own light and energy."

In light and gratitude for all you do,

Allison

Want help implementing yoga and mindfulness into the culture and daily practices of your school? Curious how these tools help to reduce stress, anxiety while increasing happiness for students and faculty?

Contact me to find out how we can work together.

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Get even MORE SCRIPTS and ILLUSTRATIONS! EDUCATE 2B Activity Cards – Double Set

Set of 32 activities from the EDUCATE 2B program. Along with colorful illustrations, each card contains our signature icons to guide you in understanding how each activity shifts the nervous system. Use these activities to help your students to: Calm, energize, focus, positively connect and get ready to learn.

GET YOURS NOW

A bit about Allison

Allison MA, OTR, E-RYT is a pediatric occupational therapist, and registered Yoga Alliance teacher-trainer who has been working with youth for over 30 years. As founder of Zensational Kids, she collaborates with administrators and educators to help them implement yoga and mindfulness tools into their educational community. Her pre-K through High School programs help to cultivate competency in self-regulation, attention, coping skills, and social/emotional learning. She has extensive experience working with children with special needs as well as trauma. She believes that children, educators and parents deserve to learn how to develop inner resources to help them thrive, rather than merely survive. She is a national and international presenter, author, wife and parent, passionate about empowering youth and the adults in their lives to lead from a balanced mind and heart.

