

TIPS FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS DURING COVID-19



Take Care of Yourself

Practice self-care strategies, including eating healthy, getting enough sleep, exercising, and finding time to take breaks. If you find yourself overwhelmed by negative thoughts, seek out needed mental health support for yourself or loved ones.

Share Information

Provide age-appropriate information and accurate answers about the news while limiting excessive television or social media.

Express Feelings

Acknowledge and support children in processing their full range of emotions and concerns. Find ways for children to express their feelings through conversation, music, art, dance, writing, or other activities.

Share a Sense of Control

Share with children what you're doing to keep them safe. Help children learn about and practice proactive strategies, such as frequent handwashing, to stay healthy. In addition to promoting healthy practices, this can help them feel a greater sense of control.

Provide Consistent Routines

Whenever possible, provide consistency in daily routines including meals and bedtimes. Consistent routines can help foster a sense of safety.

Maintain Connections

Help children and adolescents think of creative ways to maintain their friendships and social connections. Remember that your own social connections are important as well, and make time to reach out by phone or virtually to family and friends.

Ask for Help

Proactively reach out to schools and community organizations to support you in meeting any additional needs your family may have, such as access to meals or support services.

Adapted from CASEL's *Guidelines for Parents and Caregivers*.



SCREEN FREE FAMILY ACTIVITY IDEAS



- ✿ Play “Story Building.” One person starts the story, and then other family members add to it.
- ✿ Exercise. Take a walk, do a dance, do yoga, stretch, ride a bike.
- ✿ Play the Alphabet Game. One person chooses a category (e.g., animals) and family members go around naming an animal with the assigned letter. The first person starts with A. Second with B. Etc. The winner chooses the next category.
- ✿ Read to your pet. This is great for young readers as well as children with reading challenges.
- ✿ Make paper airplanes, origami, hats, paper doll chain, or paper boats.
- ✿ Have a child draw or trace their hand or random shape, and see what animals you can make out of it.
- ✿ Play “House of Cards/Blocks/Coins.” Using a deck of cards, blocks, coins, choose a flat surface and have each person build a house. Whichever house stands the longest wins.
- ✿ Have a treasure hunt where you write down clues on slips of paper that lead children to a “treasure.”
- ✿ Have a scavenger hunt where you make a list and have children compete to collect the most items.
- ✿ Take a nap or lay down to rest.
- ✿ Write letters to friends or family.
- ✿ Learn and perform simple magic tricks.



Adapted from *Simple Activities for Children & Adolescents* by NCTSN.



SELF-AWARENESS



Self-Awareness means being able to identify and name your own emotions, needs, strengths, and limitations. Studies have found that children who can identify their own emotions are more likely to be successful in school.

Feelings charts, like the one below, can help children connect words with their emotions.



Afraid



Disgusted



Peaceful



Angry



Joyful



Sad



Ashamed



Loving



Surprised

SILLY ANIMAL WALKS

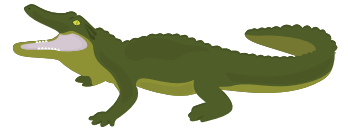


Octopus Wiggles

Start in the seated position on the floor. Attempt to lift both legs off the ground at the same time while wiggling your legs and arms.

Alligator Push-Ups

Lay on your belly and push up into a plank with your hands and toes. As you walk, push up with your hands while trying to keep your body as straight as possible.

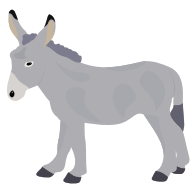
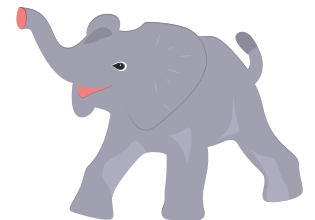


Bear Walk

Start in the standing position. Bend over and put both hands on the ground. Now, walk forward with the same leg and arm. So, move your right arm and right leg forward, then the left leg and arm at the same time, then repeat.

Elephant Walk

Start in the standing position and bend over with your hands held together. Keeping your back straight and parallel with the floor, hang your hands under your shoulders and swing them back and forth as you walk with straight legs across the floor.



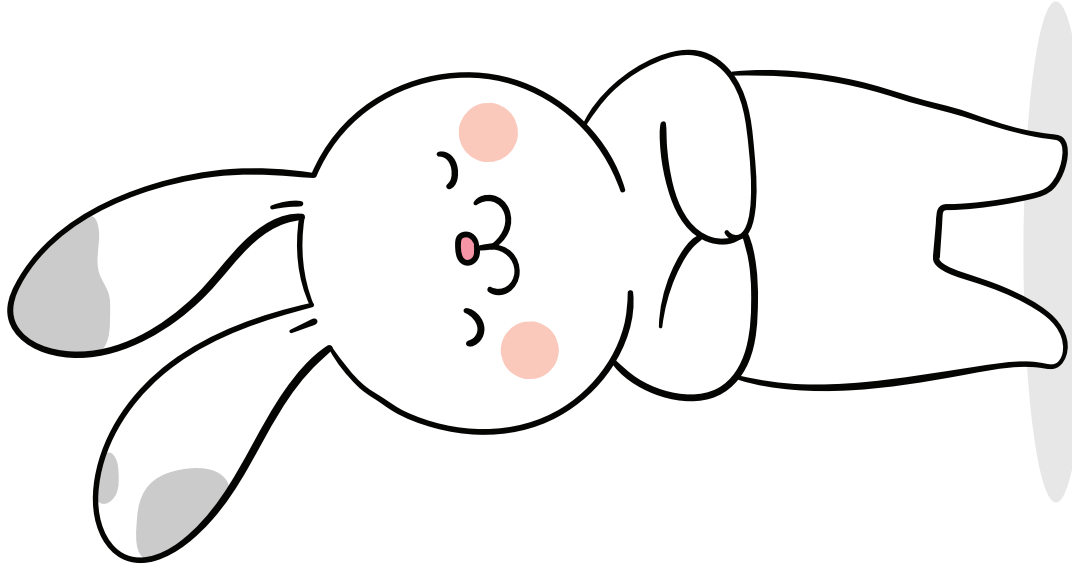
Donkey Kicks

Starting in the standing position, lean over and put both hands and both feet on the ground. When the area around you is clear, jump with your legs and kick behind you, leaving your hands on the ground.

SEL Competency: Self-Regulation

Animal walks are simple exercises that involve core strength, balance, and agility. They are a good example of “heavy work” which helps calm sensory systems, increase impulse control, and develop self-regulation.

Bunny Breaths



Sit up tall on your knees like a bunny

Take 3 quick sniffs through your nose, then one long, slow exhale through your nose

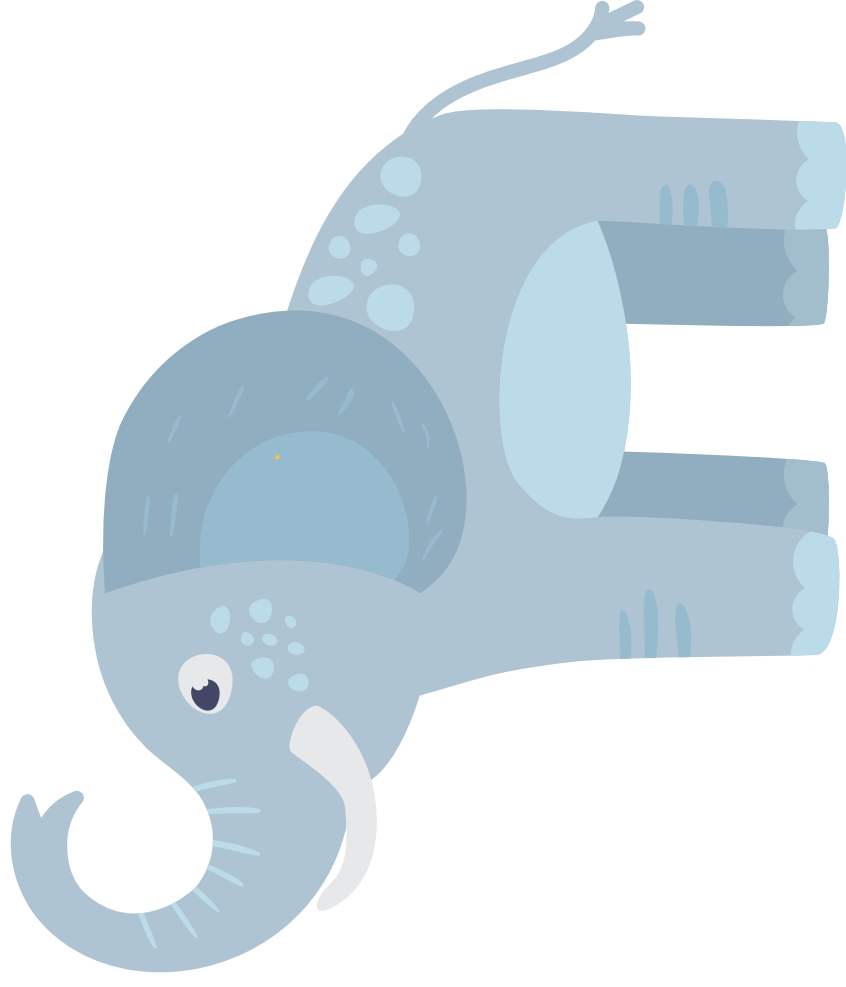
See if you can make your exhale longer and slower each time while you look around for carrots

Elephant Breaths

Stand with your feet wide apart and your arms dangling in front of you like an elephant's trunk

Breathe in deeply through your nose, and raise your arms high above your head

Slowly swing your arms down again while you breathe out through your mouth

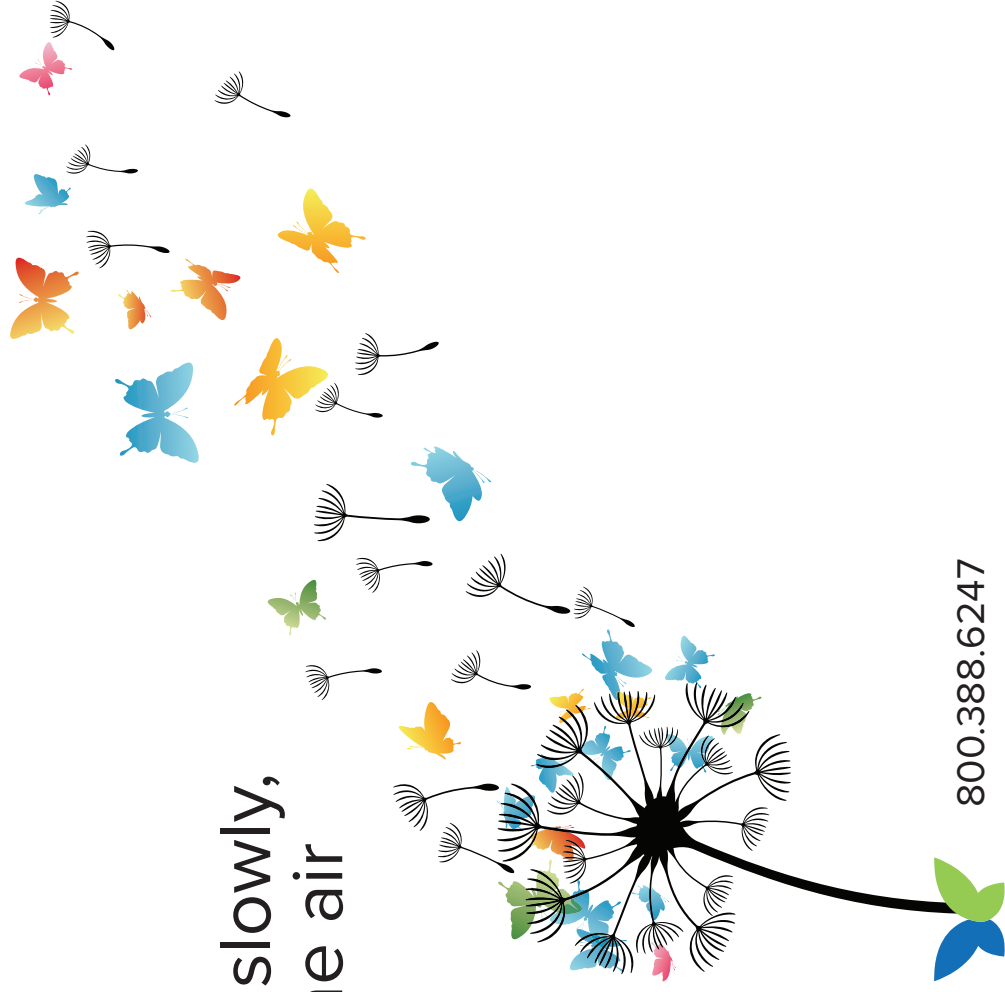


Dandelion Breaths

Sit up tall and relax your shoulders

Imagine a dandelion flower (or look at this one)

Take a deep breath in,
then blow the breath out slowly,
sending the seeds into the air



Tummy Breaths

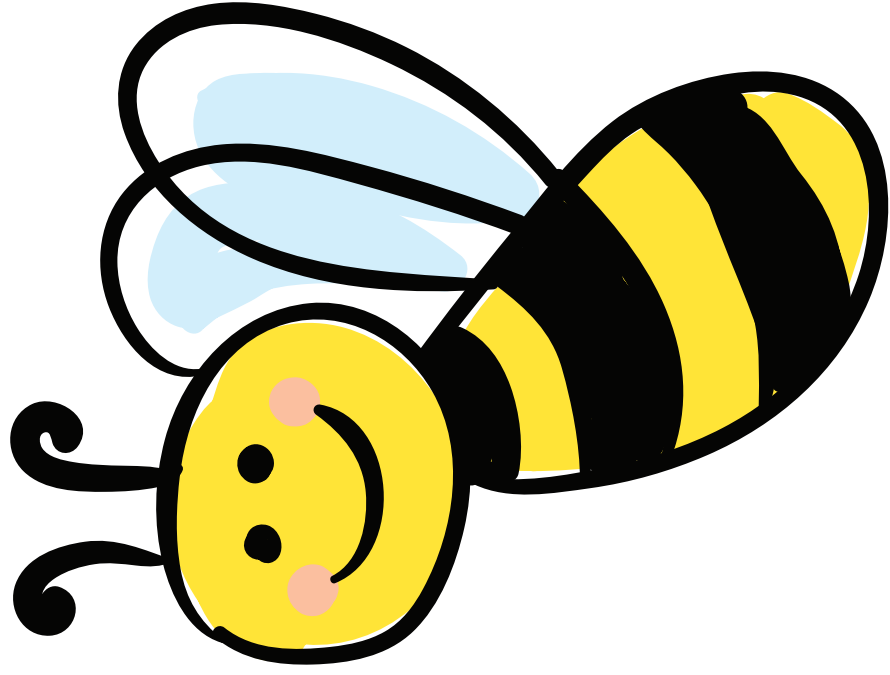
Lie down on the floor or in your bed and place a stuffed animal on your stomach

Take a deep breath and watch the stuffed animal rise, then lower as you exhale

Keep taking deep breaths to rock your stuffed animal to sleep



Bumblebee Breaths



Sit up tall, relax your
shoulders, and close
your eyes

Breathe in deeply
through your nose

Breathe out, making
a bee buzzing or
humming sound



Lazy 8 Breaths



Slowly trace the shape with your finger.

Inhale while you trace around the left side, pause, then exhale while you trace around the right side

