

Ideas for relaxation and winding down at the end of the day for primary aged school children

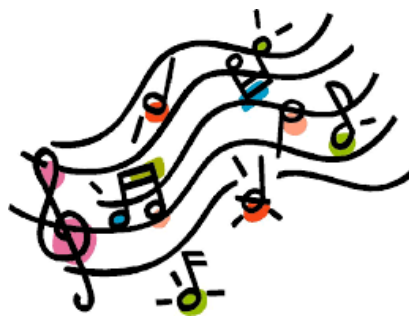
1. **Visualisation** – Make sure the children are comfortable and then ask them to become aware of their bodies as they are sat in their chairs – feeling their feet on the floor. Becoming aware of their hands in their laps. Listening for the sounds around them. Once they are still ask them to focus on their breathing – choose a method in which to do this (7-11 belly breathing or tracing up and down their fingers as they breathe in and out). Then read a visualisation text to the children or make up your own – remember to give them a chance to gently come back to the real world at the end. Remind the children that they can do this to help themselves to get off to sleep.

Ideas for visualisation – could be a walk in the park or the countryside – being at the seaside or on a desert island.

David Farmer in his book 101 Drama Games and Activities has a great outline for a visualisation in his Desert Island relaxation piece.



2. **Listening to music** – go through breathing techniques and getting comfortable so that the children are not fidgety. Then play a gentle piece of music and just allow the children to rest – it need only be for a few minutes. The children can close their eyes. Remember to gently bring them back into the real world at the end.



3. **Mindfulness colouring** and listening to music.

4. **Progressive Muscle Relaxation** – go to Kelly Roper’s website to read the instructions on how this works: https://stress.lovetoknow.com/Top_Ten_Relaxation_Techniques_Children



5. <https://copingskillsforkids.com/blog/calming-and-relaxing-coping-skills>
The above website presents various suggestions for calming and relaxing coping strategies.

Alternatively, one could use the following technique to help wind down and relax - visualising 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 they hear, 2 things they smell, and 1 thing they taste. This activity is also useful if someone is in a highly emotional state.

6. **The Mindfulness Walk** – Prior to the end of the school day in the afternoon take some time to stand outside in a space and reflect on what they see and hear. They could think about the things that they can feel, wind in their hair, sun on their faces, leaves etc. What do they notice around them? What sounds do they hear? What quiet sounds do they hear?



7. **Calming Down Jar** - This activity will need some preparation but instructions can be found on the Twinkl website – make a calming down jar with your class – these can be made out of old plastic bottles (a way of reusing the bottles again) or a glass jar (less practical as it could be dropped and get broken). You may also not want to use glitter as it is another source of plastic etc. The idea is to make their own snow globe so that these can be shaken up and as the glitter settles the children can also settle down – perhaps encouraged by a calming breathing pattern.



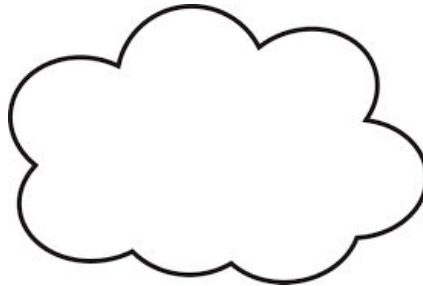
8. **Journal time** – use this time to complete a daily journal -
<https://www.weareteachers.com/mind-body-skills/>

This website shows how keeping a journal can also be expanded to making lists, writing poems, keeping notes on books they have read.



9. **Story time** – use this time to have a story or discuss a poem. The Wolf's Colourful Coat by Avril McDonald is available on You Tube and is a great story for infants. Here is the link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2593x-H3xQ>

10. **Breathing and Thinking Guided Meditation** – this is available through Twinkl and comes with a PowerPoint to guide you through as well as a script and Thought Clouds to write on.



11. **Relax like a Cat** – A guided visualisation to help young people to relax. It can be read by yourself or you can listen to it being read. This will take about 15 minutes to achieve.
<https://www.moodcafe.co.uk/for-children-and-young-people/relaxation-for-children.aspx>

You can find the leaflet for reading this aloud by following this link:
<https://www.moodcafe.co.uk/media/26930/Relaxleaflet.pdf>



12. **Ten Minutes Reflective Silence** – Give the children the opportunity to firstly steady their breathing and to reflect silently for ten minutes. This might be difficult to begin with and might need building up to. One could help direct their thoughts on certain subjects to start off.

Further ideas for calming and relaxing activities can be found at the following web addresses:

<https://letschill.co.uk/index.php/product>

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/5-ways-teach-relaxation-skills-your-child>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/joinin/seven-techniques-for-helping-kids-keep-calm>

[https://stress.lovetoknow.com/Top Ten Relaxation Techniques Children](https://stress.lovetoknow.com/Top_Ten_Relaxation_Techniques_Children)

<https://www.weareteachers.com/mind-body-skills/>

You might find that straight after lunch time break some calming down activities would be suitable for getting your children in the right frame of mind for working and so enable them to leave playtime at the door.