

# KEIKI SELF-CARE: DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

*What is Diaphragmatic Breathing?* A form of deep breathing that is done by contracting the diaphragm, a muscle located horizontally between the thoracic cavity and abdominal cavity.

*What are the benefits of Diaphragmatic Breathing?* It encourages full oxygen exchange. It helps you relax, lowering the harmful effects of the stress hormone, cortisol, on your body. It can also be beneficial when experiencing anxiety or stress.

## Three different ways to teach keiki diaphragmatic breathing:



Bubble breathing is simply blowing bubbles to help to introduce keiki to deep breathing in a fun way. We tend to breathe shallow and quickly when we are anxious or overwhelmed. Teaching keiki how to slow their breathing can help them cope with their anxious feelings.

○ How to: Instruct keiki to focus on blowing the biggest bubbles they can by taking a slow, deep breath and letting it out. Remind them that big breaths make big bubbles!



Pinwheel breathing is another breathing exercise we can teach keiki to help them cope when they are feeling anxious or overwhelmed. This exercise allows keiki to learn how different ways of breathing can effect their minds and bodies.

○ How to: Instruct keiki to hold a pinwheel in front of their face, and then to take a deep, slow breath in, hold the breath, then slowly release the breath while blowing the pinwheel to make it move slowly. You can ask keiki if they feel relaxed? Then have them try fast, short breaths and ask them how they feel?



Teddy Bear Breaths give keiki the opportunity to visualize diaphragmatic breathing. It will teach them how to use their diaphragm to take breaths and will give them a moment to ground themselves.

○ How to: Instruct keiki to lay on a flat surface then place a stuffed animal on their stomach. They can take deep breaths while trying to move their stuffed animal with their breaths.

