

## Lesson B:B1

### Send home Newsletter #3.

Turtle Breathing is an important method for redirecting attention so the child can take a break and think only about the feel of breath come in and out of his nose. We are using it from the beginning in spark\*EL so the child can experience what 'calm' feels like – that sensation of ease and quiet.

**The goal in this lesson** is to help the child learn to regulate his rate of breathing, with emphasis on a slower rate to help calm and center himself.

**Area of self-regulation 1:** Behavior

**Area of focus 1:** Breathing

**Area of skill development 1:** Awareness of Ability

**Primary executive functions:**

**Secondary executive functions:**

	Inhibitory control		Planning and organization
	Self-monitoring		Working memory
	Cognitive flexibility		

Comments on executive functions: This activity requires the child to control his rate of breathing and begin to monitor his performance. Some cognitive flexibility is needed to perform the actions with less and less direction from an adult. There's little emphasis on planning and organization and working memory in the sense that only breathing is required each time and it's done in response to different models.

**Task variation:**

Change speed

**Task structuring:**

**Directness of adult involvement:** (1) Imitation of adult model and (2) imitation of peer model

**General organization and arrangement of the activity:** Make sure the space where you practice is quiet and you won't be disturbed. The space should be as uncluttered as possible with minimal distractions.

Begin with a short 2 minute practice time. Extend it a little at each practice. Ten minutes is our ultimate goal.

Do not rush into practice. If you're feeling rushed or stressed, take a few minutes to chat quietly before starting.

Do three breaths in and out every time you practice slow Turtle Breathing.

Start in a comfortable sitting position. Sit on the floor with a pillow or in a comfortable chair. The most important things are that you and the child are able to sit up straight but be comfortable and relaxed with your body feeling secure and well-grounded.



If you sit on the floor, try a lotus position (see illustration to the right) or sit with one leg over the other (cross-legged) or with one leg in front of the other.

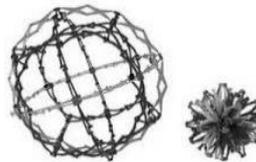
You and the child should rest your hands on your thighs or have them gently cupped in each other. Close your eyes to make it easier to concentrate.

**Objectives:**

The child will be able to use Turtle Breathing (1) by imitating the adult model and (2) by imitating a peer model for at least five minutes in each condition. (Ten minutes is our ultimate goal.)

**Materials:**

- soothing background music can help set the tone for practicing Turtle Breathing (see Resources files – RESOURCES -
- Hoberman sphere (shown on the right) that can be expanded and contracted to simulate lungs filling with and emptying air



**Language of spark\*EL to use in this lesson:**

**Key words & phrases:**

We, we're ...  
 Let's ...  
 Look/listen really carefully.  
 How did you do?  
 Did you do the Turtle Breathing okay?  
 You really know how to do Turtle Breathing.  
 Look at how you did your Turtle Breathing.

We can ...  
 It was pretty good but I think your Turtle Breathing could do better.  
 You're right, your Turtle Breathing really did a great job!  
 Did you help the other children do the Turtle Breathing okay?  
 You really listened and watched your friend (the 'teacher').

**Vocabulary & concepts:**

Turtle Breathing (slow)	Calm
Teacher	nostrils

**Introduction:**

(1) "Now we're going to do breathing in a new way. We can breathe slowly like this turtle (show picture of turtle and

demonstrate slow breathing through your mouth or nose). Feel the air come in to your nose and then out very slowly. This helps your brain and your body feel calm." Demonstrate breathing in to fill your lungs (use the Hoberman sphere to simulate lungs filling with air) and then slowly breathe out (collapse the Hoberman sphere to simulate air emptying from the lungs).

Prompt the child (speaking calmly, quietly and slowly), "Let's sit quietly and focus on our Turtle Breathing. Air goes slowly in and out of our lungs. We can feel the air on our nostrils, coming in and going out. Notice that the air is cool coming in and ... then it's warm on coming out. Breathe in and breathe out, taking your time and thinking only about your breathing. Let the air come in and feel it. Then let it go out and feel the air on your nostrils.

- (2) "Today, one child is going to be the teacher. He's going to show us and tell us how to do our Turtle Breathing. We have to watch and listen and do what he says."

#### **Practice:**

- 1) Prompt the child (speaking calmly, quietly and slowly), "Let's sit quietly and focus on our Turtle Breathing. Air goes slowly in and out of our lungs. We can feel the air on our nostrils, coming in and going out. Notice that the air is cool coming in and ... then it's warm on coming out". Continue breathing with the child. Start speaking again when the child seems to be losing focus.  
  
"Breathe in and breathe out, taking your time and thinking only about your breathing." Continue breathing with the child. Start speaking again when the child seems to be losing focus.  
  
"Let the air come in and feel it. Then let it go out and feel the air on your nostrils. If your brain starts thinking about other things, just be gentle with it. Tell it you're only thinking about your breathing right now. Breathe in and breathe out." Continue breathing with the child. Start speaking again when the child seems to be losing focus.
- (1) Stand back and participate with the children. Let the 'teacher' take the lead. Use the same procedures as #1 above.

#### **Prompting:**

- (1) "I can breathe really slowly. Make your breathing do the same. Feel the air come in to your nose and then out slowly. This helps your brain and your body feel calm." Use the Hoberman sphere as appropriate.
- (2) Prompt the 'teacher' child only as necessary. If any of the other children are experiencing difficulty, direct your prompts to the 'teacher' so he can maintain his role.

#### **Self-monitoring:**

- 1) Every second or third round of Turtle Breaths, ask him how he did. Ask, "Did you do your Turtle Breathing okay?"  
  
Provide concise and honest information about his accuracy, for example, "It was pretty good but I think your Turtle Breathing could be slower.", "It looked like your brain wasn't thinking about

breathing. Let's think only about the air coming in and out." or "You're right, your Turtle Breathing was really good!"

- (1) After the 'teacher' takes a turn, ask him, "Did you help the other children do the Turtle Breathing okay? Provide concise and honest feedback about things he did well and things he could work on.

Provide feedback to the other children or prompt the 'teacher' to give them feedback, like, "You really listened and watched your friend (the 'teacher'). Nice going."

**Solidifying:**

Help the child review (a) what executive functions he used/exercised (brakes, organizer, storage box, boss and super car) in the lesson, (b) why it helps to use Turtle Breathing and (c) what he noticed when he used it. Some children won't be able to put this into words but try to prompt responses from him. Clarify and add information as needed.

**Highlighting:**

"Look at how you made your breathing go slow. You really know how to do Turtle Breathing."

**Additional Comments:**