

EASE at Home (Grades K-3)

Strategies to help children cope with anxiety

Sometimes it's hard for adults to know what to say or do to ease a child's worries, especially during times of change and uncertainty. As the most important big people in their world, parents and caregivers can help children feel safer and soften the sharp edges of whatever is happening to make their worries grow.

Relaxation Skills: Tense & Relax

What is it?

When kids and adults feel worried, they tense up physically. This muscle tension can feel uncomfortable and contribute to general feelings of unease. Tense & Relax involves children learning to tense up, hold and completely relax each muscle group, one at a time. This [Flopometer](#) video describes this concept in a child-friendly way.

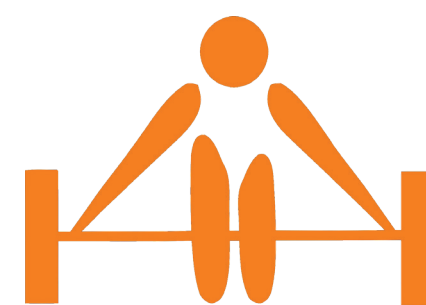
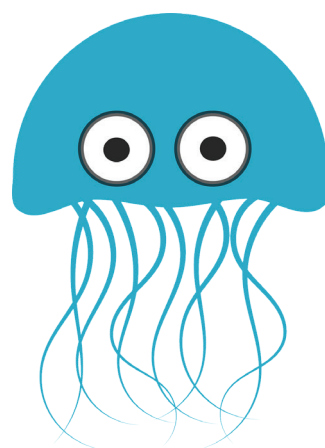
How?

Help your child understand the difference between feeling tense and feeling relaxed by asking them to imagine themselves as:



Stiff, uncooked spaghetti, then soft, cooked spaghetti

A rigid robot, then a floppy jellyfish floating in water



A body-builder flexing each muscle group one by one

Alternatively, read a tense and relax [script](#) out loud. Use a calming tone and pick a quiet time like after lunch or before bed when you won't feel rushed.

Follow along with a guided tense and relax exercise like the one in this [video](#) by GoZen.

Hint: Just like Calm Breathing, Tense and Relax exercises are best practised regularly so they will be more effective when your child needs to calm their body.



everyday
anxiety
strategies for
educators

EASE at Home is a collection of classroom resources that have been adapted for parents and caregivers to help children manage anxiety and worries at home.

