

## Relaxation to Support Wellbeing For Young Children

### **Relaxation, Visualization, Breath Awareness**

Cultivating quiet in our busy lives is a skill that will serve children well for the whole of their lives. Being able to relax is just as important for our health as exercise and activity. Awareness of the breath is an essential part of stilling the mind and deep breathing also supports good health and posture. The diaphragm acts like a lift, rising up to expel air and dropping down to allow for inhalation. Deep breathing into the abdomen (belly breath) ensures a good supply of oxygen to the body and the brain.

Rest and relaxation after yoga calms the nervous system and gives the brain time to integrate new information it is learning. Visualisation consists of relaxed fantasy stories that the children can participate in and enjoy while lying down, preferably with eyes closed. It allows children to use their imagination and encourages them to participate in their own way in thoughts and feelings with no criticism or censure. It helps children to learn the value of peace and reflection as well as building relaxation skills.

Progressive relaxation focuses on parts of the body and using our breath to help relax the muscles. Keep relaxation activities short, especially at first – just a few minutes will change their energy levels as well as allowing children to build skills in relaxation and visualisation. Give the children time to move out of relaxation and visualisation so they have time to re-orient. Encourage children to say how they feel.

Children will only build a vocabulary of relaxation ideas and feelings with experience and modeling from adults.

Our YogaPlay Book & CD have a variety of relaxation sequences specifically designed for children including: Floating on a cloud, Warmed by the Sun, Melting Ice Cream & Resting Giant. You may like to try these with your children to use as a basis to develop your own magic box of relaxation stories & sequences.

### **Reference:**

YogaPlay and Relaxation for Young Children. [www.adventuresinmusic.com.au/cds\\_books\\_dvds.html](http://www.adventuresinmusic.com.au/cds_books_dvds.html)