Relaxation Techniques for Children

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One way for parents to reduce their own daily anxiety levels is to ensure that their children are not experiencing any overwhelming stress. It might sound shocking to make the claim that children need or minimally would benefit from using relaxation techniques. In an ideal situation, the lives of children should be carefree, filled with excitement, adventure, and discovery as they grow, making friends and shaping themselves into the people they will one day be.

However, pressures on children today are higher than they ever have been, especially from parents. The pressure to be in honors classes, on traveling, all-star sports teams, in rigorous music and dance classes, on highly competitive cheerleading squads, and in beauty pageants are just a few examples of the many extremely challenging and time consuming extracurricular activities in which children are participating. The extremely high cost of college and private high schools today are making parents more motivated than ever to ensure that their child is “the best” in some field that might garner him or her a prestigious scholarship. Of course, all of this pushing is done with the intention of setting the child up to have a bright future. Unfortunately, this pressure might cause a child, who is far less emotionally and intellectually developed than an adult, to crack under the stress. This break can create all sorts of problems for the child, including misbehaving, acting out, seeking isolation or even negatively impacting the relationship with parents. This article will suggest some relaxation tips focused specifically on children that can help with daily stresses and fears, which they may not even fully understand.

Guided relaxation scripts for children to eliminate their specific fears and worries are one excellent method parents can employ to help calm their children. A creative parent might be able to invent a script to guide their child through the process of imaginatively conquering a fear, but pre-written scripts are easily accessible online and on CD. The goal of a guided relaxation script for children is to help them through the mental process of facing a fear or completing a challenging activity. For example, if your child is afraid of the dark you might try employing a relaxation script that engage the child by having him close his eyes, cover his head with a blanket, and turn off the lights. With you sitting close beside, you might repeat with him, “The darkness is safe. I am warm, happy and there is nothing to fear here. I am comfortable and darkness is okay.” After repeating this activity a few nights in a row with you close by, the child will see that there is truly nothing to fear and perhaps he will try the activity on his own.

You can also guide your child through imagining the successful resolution of a challenging activity. For example, if your child is extremely fearful of writing an essay for his test next week, you can guide him through it mentally. Direct him to close his eyes and picture his classroom; envision the test paper, the questions, his hand writing on the paper, his feet walking the completed essay up to the teacher’s desk, and the smile on his face when she returns it with an A+. Imaging completing the essay gives the child some mental belief that is it actually possible. Along with having him imagine the completion, you can actually practice writing essays with him.

Breathing techniques for children can also be helpful for relieving stress because of the actual, physical effects of breathing exercises. It may be a bit difficult to convince your child to sit calmly and engage in this exercise, but the increased oxygenation and blood flow to the brain...
due to the deep breathing can literally relax your child, putting his mind and body in sync.

For anybody experiencing stress, but particularly for children, reading, writing, and drawing are excellent relaxation techniques. These calm activities can re-direct the mind away from problems or even help the child to get some of the stress off of his chest by putting it down on paper. Finally, you might try asking them what they want to do. Children’s days are often planned for them, so having the chance to voice his opinion and actually choose the activity might be extremely relaxing and uplifting for a child.