

## **S.T.A.R.**

© Becky Bailey

*This is a calming activity that your child has learned at school. When children feel upset, it is helpful for them to have a repertoire of strategies for calming down and developing self-control. If your child becomes upset, you may want to suggest using the strategy.*

**Smile.**

**Take a deep breath.**

**And**

**Relax.**

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## Balloon

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- Place your hands on your head and lock your fingers together.
- Breathe in deeply and raise your hands over your head as if your air were filling up a balloon.
- Sniff in more air. Sniff in one more time.
- Then let the air out as you drop your hands back down to your head.
- Make a “ppppbbbbbbbb” sound as the air empties from the pretend balloon. Repeat.

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## Drain

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- Extend both arms in front of your body parallel to the floor while you make a fist with both hands. Imagine your hands are faucets.
- Tighten your muscles and exhale slowly while releasing your muscles. Make a "sssshhh" sound as you pretend to release the water in the faucets.
- End with your hands open and your arms relaxed at your sides.
- After a few seconds, repeat.

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## Pretzel

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- Stand or sit, and cross one ankle over (or in front of) the other.
- Extend your arms to the front.
- Cross one wrist over the other wrist, face palms together, and clasp hands together. Bring clasped hands in toward the chest, twisting them down and toward the body and then up next to the chest.
- Close eyes and inhale with tongue positioned on the roof of your mouth. Exhale and release your tongue.
- Repeat

This activity shifts the electrical energy of the brain from the low level (survival centers) to the higher regions (reasoning centers). The tongue on the roof of the mouth stimulates the limbic system to coordinate with the frontal lobes, integrating the left and right hemispheres of the brain.

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