



# Helping Your Kids Calm Down

Relax Using The Four Elements

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Give children the tools to regulate their emotions and their bodies. Watch them become better learners; relaxed and ready to learn.

Dr. Judy Moench

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Full program available soon.

# Foreword

This is the first in an e-book series for parents. Stay tuned for more ideas on helping your child learn to regulate their emotions and calm their mind and body.

## We Would Like To Gratefully Acknowledge The Contributions Of ...

### ***Elan Shapiro, MA***

Created The Four Elements strategy which has been the inspiration for this e-book. Thank you to Elan for sharing your work.

### ***Lucina Artigas***

Developer of the Butterfly Hugs which are used in this program. Thank you Lucy for your creative strategy.

### ***Katie O'shea***

Katie's ongoing consultation and collaboration during the development of the Prepped 4 Learning program has been significant to it's completion. Thank you Katie.

### ***Mark Wesner, BEd***

Assisted with the creation of motivating activities for children. Thank you Mark.

### ***Francine Shapiro, PhD***

Author of a ground breaking psychotherapy called EMDR Therapy (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). Prepped 4 Learning is EMDR informed.

# A Note On The Materials And Structure

This e-book is essentially designed as a guide to help you teach your children how to calm their mind and body. It provides you with discussion topics, activities, and suggested scripts. These are not carved in stone, but are meant as direction markers.

Having said that, Prepped 4 Learning may be most effective when the pathway described herein is followed as closely as possible. With that in mind, here are a few words explaining the various directions and elements you'll encounter inside.



### **Activity**

A suggested activity to use with your child. It will usually include instructions on how to conduct the activity and a list of the materials you'll need.



### **Discussion**

This is a suggested topic that will enhance the activity. It will be noted whether the Discussion should follow or precede the Activity.



### **Parent Script**

This is the content and language we've found most helpful to address certain topics and activities and discussions. You will naturally use your own style and personality to convey the content, but the essence of the content should always be focused on.



### **Something to Remember**

These are tips and hints for the parents to bear in mind as the children participate in that section's discussion or activity. Sometimes these points may be worth sharing with children depending on their age, comprehension level and state of mind.



### **Available to Download**

This indicates printable or visual materials that are available to download from the website.



### **Slide Show**

This indicates an interactive slideshow / presentation to show children.



# Relax Using The Four Elements

**What Do The Four Elements Do?** They help calm the body and mind.

As we move through the Four Elements, developed by Elan Shapiro, various materials will be required for these exercises. These include The Four Elements Slides, the Breathing Posters, the Butterfly Hugs Poster, the Four Elements Poster, and a glass of water. For Follow-Up Practice, Materials Needed include a Wrist Band, Sticker, or Bracelet (for each child). Enhancing Activities for this section include Think, (Ink), Pair, Share and Be the Expert (in which you'll need the Four Elements cards Explanation Sheets).



## The Four Elements Slides



### Parent Script

"Today we are going to learn a new process called The Four Elements. It's going to help us learn how to help our body and our mind relax."

Select an object to help your child remember to monitor their stress level. You may consider giving a sticker to each child that they can put in a visible place, or have children make a bracelet or wrist band with four beads to indicate each of the elements. Show arm band, sticker, or bracelet to your child.



### Parent Script

"The Four Elements are Earth, Air, Water, and Fire. We are going to use an arm band (sticker) to help us remember this strategy. Let's learn how the process works."

Start slide presentation.

## 4 ELEMENTS

- **FIRE/LIGHT**  
Imagine your safe or calm place
- **WATER**  
Make some saliva (water) in your mouth ... focus
- **AIR**  
Balanced and centred breathing
- **EARTH**  
Connected ... safety in the present

4 Elements by E. Shapiro, 2007 | Adapted for Prepped 4 Learning, Moench 2020.

**PREPPED 4 LEARNING**



### **Parent Script**

“Take a measure. How stressed are you right now from 0 (not stressed at all) to 10 (the most stressed you can imagine). Now rate your stress level from 0 to 0. Let’s remember that number for later. Take a minute and write it down.”

Wait for the children to finish. Then introduce a possible discussion topic around how our bodies actually feel when we are stressed out (fight, flight or freeze) and how this might help illustrate the Four Elements being out of balance. Our mouths might become dry, we may feel dizzy, we might get hot ears, and so on. Weave this into the following Parent Script if appropriate and timely.



### **Parent Script**

“The first element is Earth. Feel both of your feet on the ground. Notice the safety in this moment. Here and now. Look around the room and notice three things you can see, hear, or touch. Say them in your head. Feel yourself supported by the chair. We can feel the ground under our feet and the chair underneath us, supporting us.”

Pause and give children a moment to notice the connected feelings in their body. You may need to bring further awareness to these feelings by asking them to really engage their senses. For example, you may want to ask “What do you hear? What is the sensation on your skin? Can you feel your shirt touching your neck?”



### **Parent Script**

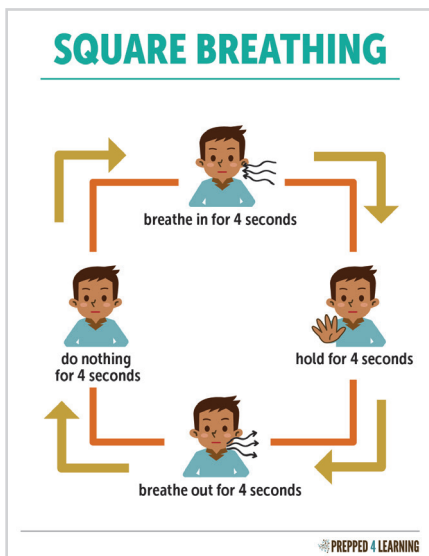
“The second element is Air. As you continue to notice your feet on the ground, breathe 3 or 4 deep, slow belly breaths. In through your nose. Out through your mouth.”

Show Breathing images and practice. Research has suggested a number of techniques for breathing. Here are a few...



## Belly breathing

A technique where we breathe in and our belly goes out. When we breathe out our belly goes in. It's how we automatically breathe when we are relaxed, but sometimes it feels the opposite to what is natural, and so we may need to practice. See poster for explanation and allow children time for practice.



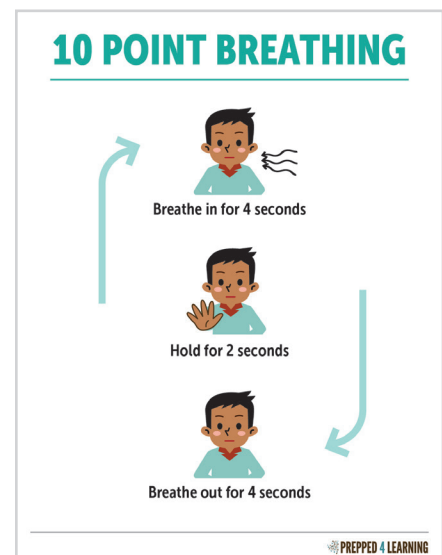
## Square breathing

Children are asked to breathe in for four seconds, hold their breath for four seconds, exhale for four seconds, and do nothing for four seconds and then begin again.



## Ten point breathing

Breathe in for four seconds hold for two seconds and exhale for four seconds. It mimics our natural breathing pattern. Continue to do the same ten point breathing several times in a row. Allow time to practice different breathing techniques.

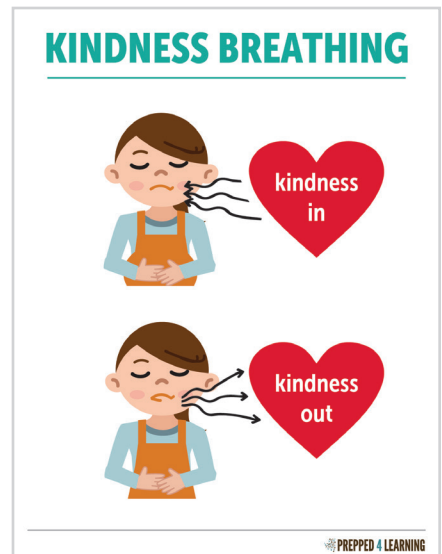






## Kindness breathing

When we breathe in we give ourselves what we need. Remember to be kind to yourself. As you breathe out, think about someone else you know who might need some kindness. Take a moment and notice a picture of them in your mind's eye (head). Think about them as you breathe out. Send them kindness. Let's do it a few times. Breathe in kindness for yourself. Breathe out kindness for someone else. In and out. One for me. One for you...



## Focused breathing

When we are feeling nervous or afraid we take short, quick, shallow breaths. We can help ourselves relax by taking long, slow, deep breaths. When we focus on what we are doing it can help us calm ourselves. Let's practice. When you breathe in say to yourself, 'I am breathing in' and when you breathe out, say to yourself, 'I am breathing out'. Let's try it a few times together. I am breathing in (pause). I am breathing out (pause). I am breathing in (pause). I am breathing out (pause).....



## Parent Script

"The third element is Water. Continue to feel your feet on the ground and the air that you breathe, make some saliva in your mouth. Think about sucking a lemon or rub your tongue across your teeth. Notice your mouth begin to water. Give me the thumbs up when you have more saliva (water) in your mouth."

If children are having difficulty, allow them to drink some water. Be prepared for this possibility by having water available ifor them.



## Parent Script

"When you have saliva (water) in your mouth, your body can begin to relax and calm down. Notice that happening now."

Pause.



### **Parent Script**

“The fourth element is Fire/Light. As you continue to feel your feet on the ground, the air that you breathe, and the saliva in your mouth, think about your relaxed or clam word or imagine a special calming place. Notice where you feel calm in your body. We can fire (light) a pathway between our brain and our body to help to remind ourselves that it is okay to notice where you feel calm in your body. Notice your mind begin to quiet.”

Give the children a moment to notice where they are feeling their relaxed calm state in their body.

See Butterfly Hugs poster.



### **Parent Script**

“Let’s help our brains remember what calm feels like in our bodies. Give yourself some Butterfly Hugs. Notice your quiet mind. Think about the good feelings in your body. Let’s do some more Butterfly Hugs. Let’s help our brain and body remember.”

Pause while children are doing a short set of Butterfly Hugs.



### **Parent Script**

“Let’s take another measure. How stressed do you feel now from 0 to 10? Write down your number on your sheet. What was your number from before (say this on the ‘then and now’ slide). Has your rating changed?”

Have a family discussion. Ask questions such as, ‘How many of you had a lower number after doing the exercise than before?’; ‘Why do you think the number changed?’; ‘Do you think you can use that in the future?’

# Follow-up Practice

Hand out arm band (or stickers) to children. Practice the Four Elements as before. This time, do all four elements at the same time. After you have completed the Four Elements exercises, help the children use their arm band (or sticker) in the following way:



## Parent Script

“Let’s help our brains remember that our arm band (or sticker) can help us monitor our stress level. Touch your arm band/sticker and focus on it for a moment while we do a few slow Butterfly Hugs.”

PAUSE



## Parent Script

“Now each time you see your arm band (or sticker) or touch it you will be reminded to do the Four Elements exercise.”



## Something to Remember

It is suggested that children practice the Four Elements many times each day in order to use the strategy effectively. Children could be paired up with other children online and teach their buddies how to use the Four Elements. Parents might give their child the homework assignment of teaching a parent, sibling, or friend how to use the Four Elements. The next day the discussion could reinforce the fact that people can decrease their stress level through the use of the Four Elements.

# Enhancing Activities

After the slides is complete pick an activity based on the ability level of the students. Here are a few ideas.



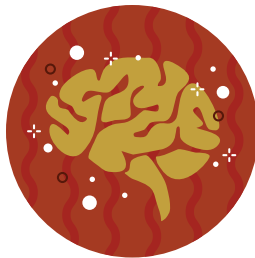
## Activity

Describe One of the Four Elements



## Parent Script

"Turn to your sibling or parent and describe one of the elements."



Fire



Water



Air



Earth

Give children time to share the element they have selected to describe to their family member. Expand on the information by asking questions like, "Tell me more about that". Work toward discussing all the elements. Remind children of the order of the elements, (i.e. starting at their feet and working all the way up to their heads. Remind them it is an activity that can help them relax their body and mind.). If the children are younger ask them to name the body part that is associated with each element by pointing to their body when the parent names the element. For example, water is associated with the mouth. The parent would say, "Water" and the students would point to their mouth.



## Activity

Think, (Ink), Pair, Share



## Discussion

Think, Pair, Share may be used for younger children, or Think, Ink, Pair, Share for older more advanced children. Think about the answer; Ink – write about one of the elements to clarify your thinking; Pair – tell your sibling or parent about what you wrote; Share – with the whole family. Write on the board: Think, (Ink), Pair, Share. If using Think, (Ink), Pair, Share, introduce the children to the acronym TIPS to help remember the process.



## Parent Script

“Pick one of the elements and think about what it means. Then write down a brief description of the element that you have selected. When you are done you can draw a picture of the element if you wish.”

Give children time to complete the first portion (think) or two portions (think, ink) depending on age.



## Parent Script

“Take turns and tell your sibling(s) or parent which element you picked and what you wrote.”

Give children time to share.

Go through all Four Elements and allow children time to share their work with the family.

Remember, practice makes permanent. Practice the 4 Elements many times throughout the day.