

How can my child relax?

- Children with developmental disabilities can learn relaxation strategies through explicit teaching. Relaxation strategies can be taught through modeling and then prompting the child to show the modeled behavior.
- A child may need to learn a relaxation strategy in steps.
- You may have to try several strategies to find the best fit for your child.
 - Strategies to try with a therapist:
 - Progressive muscle relaxation
 - Deep breathing
 - Behavioral relaxation training
 - Strategies to try on your own:
 - Counting
 - Singing
 - Sensory strategies
 - Taking a brief break from the situation to engage in any calming activity. It will be important to return to the situation eventually to build tolerance.

Relaxation tips:

1. A child must master a relaxation strategy when calm. Efforts to teach relaxation when a child is escalated are unlikely to work.
2. Once a relaxation strategy is mastered, it is best used proactively (e.g., before the child enters a stressful situation) or at early signs of agitation. A child will have difficulty following directives to engage in relaxation when highly upset.