Lesson 14: Calming Down Strong Feelings

Lesson Concepts
• Belly breathing calms down strong feelings.
• Belly breathing pushes the belly out when you breathe in.

Objectives
Students will be able to:
• Demonstrate belly breathing
• Identify and demonstrate the Calming-Down Steps

Why This Lesson Matters
The Calming-Down Steps can help students manage strong feelings. Belly breathing (diaphragmatic breathing) helps lower blood pressure and heart rate, which calms the body. Conversely, noisy, fast breathing and breathing from the chest can cause students to feel more upset.

Providing students with skills to calm themselves down during stressful or upsetting situations is always important, but especially now, as students react to changing expectations and realities.

Before the Lesson
Last time, students learned about feeling frustrated and that when they have strong feelings, they can begin to calm down by putting their hands on their tummy to check in with their body. Have students practice picturing a frustrating scenario. Have them put their hands on their tummies, say “Stop,” and name their feelings.

After the Lesson
Show students the How to Calm-Down mini-poster. Have students put their hands on their tummies and repeat each step after you. Have students reflect on a time when they were having a strong feeling. Some examples are:
• You can’t button your shirt.
• Your grandma lives in another state and is sick.
• Your sister won’t let you watch your favorite TV show.
• It’s your birthday tomorrow, and you can’t sleep.

Have students practice calming down using the steps illustrated in the poster.
Following Through
Use these strategies to reinforce lesson concepts throughout the week.

• Have students draw a picture of a time when they had a strong feeling. They can write the name of the feeling on their picture or dictate a sentence about the event to a grown-up to write for them.

• Ask families to play the Clap and Count Brain Builder at home. This game can be made more difficult by increasing the number of claps and taps, adding in stomps (stomping feet), increasing the wait-time before saying “One, two, three, go,” or mixing in slow and fast beats to make the rhythm more complex.

• Ask families to listen to “The Calm-Down Song.”

• Ask families to do the lesson Home Link together.

See the lesson Following Through Card for more ideas about how to build on key lesson concepts.

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