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## **Activities to try at home that connect to key areas of social-emotional learning**

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*Note: These activities are meant for elementary children.*

**Need more support?** Take a look at [Parents and Families - COVID-19](#) and [Students - COVID-19](#) for tips, resources and contacts to help you support your child's mental health during the pandemic response.

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### **Manage stress**

#### **Deep belly breathing**

Get ready

- Have your child get comfortable by either standing or sitting. Encourage them to keep their back straight, and shoulders and head relaxed.
- If they're comfortable with it, ask them to close their eyes.
- Have your child place their hands flat on their stomach.

Go

- Now, ask your child to breathe in deeply through their nose, filling the belly with breath.
  - Point out how hands move out.
  - Encourage them to hold their breath.
  - Slowly breathe out through the mouth to feel the stomach contract and hands move in.
  - Repeat 5-6 times
  - Practice deep belly breathing any time your child seems stressed or upset
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### **Stay positive**

#### **Gratitude moment**

Get ready

- Gather paper and a pencil (optional).

- Introduce the activity to your child. For example, “We are going to take a few minutes to talk about some of the things in our life we are grateful or thankful for.” Explain what it means to be grateful or thankful.

Go

- Share something you’re thankful for as an example.
- Everyone takes a turn sharing what they are grateful/thankful for.
- Repeat as often as you would like
- Consider writing down comments and posting them in the home.

### **Four finger affirmation**

Get ready

- Gather paper and a pencil (optional).

Go

- Ask your child to choose four words that make them feel calm and confident. It might be a sentence or just four words.
  - Examples: “I am loved today,” “I believe in me,” “Breathe, listen, smile, love,” “I can handle this.”
  - Explain that each word they choose will match a finger on their hand.
  - Have them say the words (affirmation) aloud or in their head and connect each finger with their thumb.
  - Tell your child they can repeat this as many times as they like, aloud or to themselves.
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### **Plan and problem-solve**

#### **Stop, think and go problem solving**

Get ready

- Gather paper, markers, magazines, scissors.
- Make a traffic light model with your child – draw one, build one or find a picture of one.

Go

The traffic light will be used to help with problem solving. Explain the three colours:

Red means stop! When they have a problem, they stop.

- Take a deep breath
- Talk about what the problem is

Yellow means think!

- Slow down, maybe take several deep breaths
- Think and talk about possible solutions

Green means go!

- Try out your solution
- Talk about some problems your child might face and how the traffic light might help (e.g. fight with a sibling, I want the toy, I want a snack now, I want to watch tv now).

Put the traffic light you created somewhere visible, like on the fridge. Help your child use the visual and this process each time there is a problem or a conflict.

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## **Know yourself**

### **Show and share**

Get ready

This activity is similar to “show and tell” often used at school where a student brings an item from home that they share with their classmates.

- Gather materials to write on (e.g. Post-it Notes, paper) and write with (pens, markers, etc.). (optional)

Go

- Have your child think about something about themselves that they want to share (e.g. favourite song, someone they admire, a special talent, what they are grateful for).
- Encourage your child to share their thoughts with others in the family.

- Everyone takes a turn.

*Note: This is a great activity that children can share through a phone or video call with others, such as friends or family members.*

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*[Check out this tip sheet](#) for ideas on small actions you can do to take care of yourself.*