



Time to relax...

Curriculum Idea: Relaxation and Problem Solving – Sometimes worrying can get in the way of solving our problems. There are things we can do to calm ourselves down when we feel worried. Feeling calm can sometimes be the first step in solving our problems.

Related Episode: Everything's Going to be Just Fine

Ages: 3 – 4

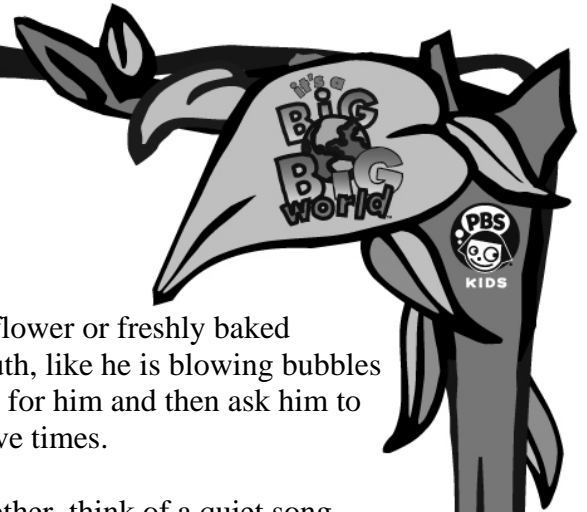
Subject: Emotions and Learning

Skills: Problem Solving, Relaxation, Self-Expression, Communication

Directions: In one episode of IT'S A BIG BIG WORLD, Wartz thinks he has a big problem: he promised Madge that he would bring in all of the mushrooms from her garden, but when he realizes how many there are to carry, he gets worried that he won't be able to finish. Instead of worrying about the situation, Snook teaches him how to stop, relax, and think through his problem. And when he does that, he is able to come up with a solution on his own – he'll carry all of the mushrooms in a basket.

Talk with your child about times when he has worried about something. Maybe he had a job that he didn't think he could finish, he lost something, or he had a misunderstanding with a friend or family member. Tell him that everyone gets worried sometimes and it is ok to feel that way. It is important to share your feelings when you are worried, and it can be easier to talk about things that are worrying us when we are relaxed. So, just like Snook helped Wartz learn how to stop and relax so he was able to think about his problem, you are going to help your child learn how to stop and relax. If we practice calming ourselves down when we're not worried, then if we have a problem in the future, it will be easier to help ourselves relax.

Tell him that you are going to create a relaxation spot. Standing in an uncluttered area away from distractions such as the TV or toy box, have him trace a big circle on the floor or carpet with his finger. Then, have him step inside his circle – his very own relaxation spot! Ask him to sit down in a comfortable position and tell him that one good way to help himself relax is to take deep breaths. First, he should breathe deeply



through his nose, like he smells something wonderful, maybe a flower or freshly baked cookies. Then, he should blow out all of the air through his mouth, like he is blowing bubbles or blowing out the candles on a birthday cake. Demonstrate this for him and then ask him to try. Together, repeat the series of breathing in and out slowly five times.

Then introduce another relaxation technique to your child. Together, think of a quiet song that he enjoys, maybe a lullaby. Sing it with him, perhaps rocking back and forth slowly as you do. Talk about how singing a favorite song can help him calm himself down.

Finally, tell him that anytime he is worried or upset about something, he can come and talk to you or another trusted adult. Often times, talking with a friend about something that is worrying us can make us relaxed and ready to face the situation.

Talk About It: Ask him if he feels calm and relaxed now. Discuss how when he feels like this, it will be easier for him to think through or talk about any problems or worries he has. Suggest that the next time he realizes that he is worried about something he should create a relaxation spot. He can stop what he is doing, draw a relaxation spot on the ground, and try his breathing exercises or singing his song. Remind him that he can also come and talk to you or another trusted adult about anything that is ever bothering him or he is worried about. You may want to set aside a few minutes each day to sit in a relaxation spot together, take a few deep breaths, and sing his song.

Take It Further: Investigate other relaxation techniques. You may want to learn about doing yoga or tai chi with your child by taking a class or reading a book from the library.