

Still Frog



Materials Needed:

Script below

Frog puppet (optional)

Time Required: 10 Minutes

Age: 3 and up

Why It Works:

We all can calm our nervous system by shifting our attention away from what is upsetting us and toward experiencing how we feel in that moment. In turn, we can then see clearly what was upsetting us, and more calmly go about solving the problem. Practicing short meditations like the Still Frog, provides an experience that helps children build a repertoire of tools for calming themselves. Consider what a gift this is for children navigating school work and social relationships!

What to say:

1. Sitting up straight, legs criss-cross, hands resting in your lap, find your breath in your belly. Putting all your attention on your breath, filling your chest and your belly, and releasing it.
2. When frogs are not swimming or hopping around they sit, very still, at the edge of their pond on the lily pad that grows there. Let's see if we can imagine being a still frog sitting on the lily pad.
3. Imagine you are a frog, and you've just finished swimming or hopping around. Notice your breathing. Is it fast because you've been moving quickly? See if you can bring all your attention to your breath.
4. Do you feel the 'still' between breaths? When you breathe in there's a pause. When you breathe out there's a pause. Try it.
5. Sit on the lily pad. Take a moment to feel your body sitting still like the frog. If there is a part of your body that keeps moving that's ok. Just notice it.
6. While you are sitting still, notice what's happening in your body. Does it want to keep moving? Is it still wiggly? Or is it happy to rest?
7. Notice what sounds you can hear by the pond.
8. Notice the smells.
9. Notice how your body feels being still.
10. Gently bring your attention back to your breath.
11. Breathe in, be still. Breathe out be still. Can you feel your stillness?
12. Take a moment to look around your pond. Thank it for being there for you. Know that you can come back to it whenever you want to be still.
13. Now bringing your attention to your breath, and when you're ready opening your eyes and quietly bringing your awareness to this moment.

Goal of the Exercise:

Focusing on sensations and images like they do in this exercise helps children calm themselves when they feel overly excited or upset. With practice they can access this experience any time they need it.

Brain Fact:

Remember that when we are upset, the brain can become "hijacked" by the emotional system, or the amygdala, that part of the brain we call the Guard Dog. When this happens it is difficult to think straight or solve a problem. Having awareness of how it feels to be still without reacting builds cognitive control of our body and our feelings. Children are usually more susceptible to emotional hijack because cognitive control is not fully developed until around the age of 25, so having these tools helps them be more in charge of themselves.