Social/Emotional ToolBox Learning Activities

**Breathing Tool:** I calm myself and check in. Breathing is something we do all the time, naturally and without thought. It is hard-wired to automatically speed up or slowdown in response to the levels of physical and emotional activity we are experiencing. The relationship between breathing and our bodies and emotions just isn’t a one-way street. Besides simply responding to changes in our bodies and emotions, our breathing can cause changes inside us as well. When we breathe purposefully with the Breathing Tool, it calms and slows us down and brings our attention inward. We become more self-aware and self-reflective about our bodies, minds, emotions, and impulses. **Because of that, we are more likely to have the insight and time to react more appropriately in stressful situations-in our own best interests and in the best interests of others.**

The process of intentional Breathing, done for the count of five seconds, helps us become self-aware and reflective. In this calm, slowed-down state, we can listen to our bodies and minds, and observe:

- How are we feeling?
- What are we thinking?
- How do we feel and act toward others and ourselves?

Being aware helps us understand and articulate our personal needs or wants and to understand or empathize with the needs or wants of others.

**Icon and Hand Gesture for Breathing Tool:**

A tape measure is used to represent the Breathing Tool. The action of pulling and pushing a measuring tape in and out of its housing can be another good way to think about slow deliberate breathing. As an alternative, you can put one hand over your heart and one hand on your tummy. Breathe in slowly through your nose. Focus on fresh air coming into your lungs and how it feels inside your body as your diaphragm begins to drop and your belly expands. Pause briefly, relax, and then exhale through your mouth as you release the old air, counting slowly to five.

**Drawing-Writing Journal Activity K-1:**

- Draw yourself using the Breathing Tool On the Breathing Tool Blank Worksheet (Part 2)
- Use the tool handout of the Tape Measure and the words to color and decorate their breathing tool. Hang this worksheet up in a place designated to be a calming/refocus place when needed to refocus, cool down and breathe.
- Discuss with your child how they might use the Breathing Tool together with a friend or a sibling or even a parent or guardian.

**Other Uses:**

Use deep breaths from transitioning from one learning activity to another

Throughout the day or weeks, bring your child back to the breathing tool and worksheet they created for their refocus/calm down spot.
**Taking Time Tool:** I take time-in and time-away. The taking time tool promotes the idea of self-regulation. There are moments in our lives when situations require us to step back and chill out-to allow ourselves some time to cool down and explore our choices, particularly during conflict and anger. At times, we may need to take a break and reflect on our options. Sometimes we need to process information, feelings, perspectives, and ways of working out the conflict before we can be effective communicators.

Time-In means taking time to check in to see what we need or are feeling. It’s an opportunity to think things through or cool down. Taking Time-In does not always require physical removal from a situation; it is more of a turning inward in order to have a period of self-reflection.

Time-Away allows us to physically remove or distance ourselves from the heat of the conflict, allowing us space to calm down and understand how we are feeling and thinking. By incorporating Time Away, students learn that they have “permission” to physically remove themselves from a difficult situation. This gives them an experience of self-control and empowers them to be proactive rather than reactive. Time-Away usually leads to Time-In because the act of removing ourselves from a conflict allows us the space to reflect inward.

**Icon and Hand Gesture for Taking Time Tool:**

A wristwatch reminds students that the Taking Time Tool is important-to pause and go inward, or to pause and gain distance (perspective). Gently tapping their wrists with their index fingers can help students remind themselves to take some Time-In or Time-Away.

**Time-In:**

- After you’ve been fighting with another individual.
- If you have been feeling grumpy, irritable, upset, or mad and you’re not sure why.
- After you’ve had a disagreement with someone.
- After you’ve had an argument or conflict with another individual.

**Time-Away:**

- When you’re feeling like you want to hurt someone else or yourself.
- When you’re feeling ready to explode.
- After you do explode.
- When you keep getting into conflicts with others around you.
- When you’re feeling over-excited and wishing you could calm down.

**Drawing-Writing Journal Activity K-1:**

- Draw yourself using the Taking Time Tool On the Taking Time Blank Worksheet (Part 2)
- Use the tool handout of the Taking Time Tool and the words to color and decorate their Taking Time Tool. Hang this worksheet up along with the Breathing Tool as a reminder to self-regulate and take time in and away to refocus, cool down and just breathe.
- Discuss with your child how they might use the Taking Time Tool together with a friend or a sibling or even a parent or guardian.
- Other Uses:
• Use deep breaths and Time Tool when transitioning from one learning activity to another
• Throughout the day or weeks, bring your child back to the Taking Time Tool and worksheet they created.