

## Guided Imagery for Kids with Anxiety

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NOTE: This handout is intended as an educational and informational aid, and is not intended to be used for the purpose of diagnosis or treatment. Diagnosis and treatment of emotional or behavioral problems, and related disorders and conditions, should be provided by a licensed mental health professional.

Guided imagery is a relaxation technique that involves creating a detailed and calming mental image to help reduce anxiety. Here's a guided imagery script for kids experiencing anxiety:

Start by finding a quiet and comfortable space where your child can sit or lie down. Let them know that you are going to guide them through a relaxing exercise that will help them feel calm and peaceful.

- Begin with Deep Breaths: Encourage your child to take a few deep breaths. Inhale slowly through the nose, counting to three, and exhale through the mouth, counting to three. Repeat this a few times to help them relax.
- Imagine a Safe Place: "Now, close your eyes and imagine a special place where you feel completely safe and happy. It can be a real place you've been to, or a magical place you create in your mind."
- Picture the Details: "Imagine the colors around you. What colors do you see? Are there any sounds in this place? Listen carefully. What do you smell? Is there a gentle breeze on your face?"
- Feeling Safe and Secure: "Feel the ground beneath you. It's soft and supportive. You are completely safe in this place. Take a moment to really feel how secure and comfortable you are."
- Use Your Imagination: "Now, use your imagination to add more details to this place. Are there any friendly animals around? What do they look like, and how do they make you feel? Is there anything fun or magical happening in this special place?"
- Create a Calming Activity: "Think about something calming you can do in this place. It could be swinging on a magical swing, floating on a cloud, or walking through a peaceful garden. What activity makes you feel happy and relaxed?"
- Connect with Positive Emotions: "As you engage in this calming activity, notice how your body feels. Feel the warmth and happiness spreading through your body. You are surrounded by positive energy."
- Slowly Return: "When you're ready, start to bring your awareness back to the present. Wiggle your fingers and toes. Take a deep breath. Open your eyes, feeling calm, refreshed, and ready to face the world."

Encourage your child to share their experience if they feel comfortable. Reinforce that they can return to this safe and calming place in their imagination whenever they need to feel calm and relaxed.