

DEEP BREATHS

from ACORN April 26, 2024

Ms. Sandra, Aurora's mom, has been coming in once a month to do yoga with our children. This past week she did more breathing activities.

Breathing practice helps children with self regulation (controlling their feelings and impulses by themselves). We do this by helping children become aware of their breathing and giving them opportunities to experience mindful breathing exercise through child-friendly activities.

We have been talking about our feelings all year by reading stories (which both affirm big feelings and show how children can handle them), giving names to different feelings (which helps children to identify what they may be feeling), and by finding ways to express them through discussion and art. Yoga breathing practices help children control their feelings.

For this session Ms. Sandra read "My Magic Breath - Finding Calm Through Mindful Breathing" by Nick Ortner. Breathing activities included energy breathing and breathing through a straw. The children practiced energy breathing by rubbing their hands together and then placing them on their stomach/eyes/head, and then they took some deep breaths and held them. We have been doing this all year, and it has become routine for our friends.

Children also learned how to release slow breaths by blowing through a straw. Ms. Sandra made it into an art activity by having them blow through the straw to create a design on paper with extra water and water colors. They then imagined what their design was, such as "mine looks like a flower" and "mine is a turtle".

This mindfulness breathing takes time and practice, and we continue to encourage it with child-friendly ways such as releasing breaths with a slow sound, like the buzz of a bee, or a hsssss like a snake. And yes! We do see children using mindfulness breathing for self soothing and regulation as when a child who had fallen and scraped their knee, approached a teacher in tears, and, when the teacher asked what they could do, the child responded, "I can take 3 deep breaths!", and did, and then ran away all better.