

# Creating Feelings of Safety & Calm

**Peace in the body can create peace in the mind, and vice versa.**

Focused movement such as yoga is a great way to begin. In a quiet space, lead kids in the turtle pose (also known as child's pose):



## Turtle

When kids are overwhelmed or feel out of control, this pose can help them “turn down” overstimulating input from the outside... and maybe even their own internal noise.

Say, “Get on your hands and knees and sit back on your heels, resting your forehead on the mat. Walk your fingers away from your body to stretch your hips, thighs, and ankles. Try moving your arms back and holding on to your feet. Don’t forget to breathe!”

Then say, “Pretend you are a turtle, safe inside your shell. Or you can pretend you’re a tiny snail in a strong shell, or a little seed, safe and warm in the soil. You choose.”

**As kids stay in the pose, you might say:**

- Slowly breathe in, slowly breathe out. Feel your chest fill up and empty out. (Again.)
- Feel the ground beneath you. Silently answer these questions: What parts of your body are touching the floor or mat? What does the ground feel like beneath your forehead? Is it cool? Soft? Hard?
- You can rest here. Try to relax your muscles and let your shoulders fall. I’ll ask some questions, but only answer them in your head. Can you hear yourself breathing? Can you feel your chest getting bigger as you breathe in? Can you feel your heart beating?
- Whisper, “I can help myself calm down,” or “There are things I can do to feel safe,” aloud. Repeat the sentences and listen to the sound of your voice.
- When you are ready, come back out of your shell (or crawl up and grow out of the soil).

# Creating Feelings of Strength & Confidence

Trauma can destroy a child's sense of self-worth and confidence in their abilities. Developing new skills can help build it back. And balance requires focus and concentration, so this pose can help quiet the mind.

## Tree Pose: Growing Roots

Say, "Stand straight and steady on two feet. Press your palms together near your heart. Then press one foot into the mat while lifting your opposite heel." (For older kids: "Turn out your knee with your heel lifted, and bring your heel to your inner ankle. Move your hands up over your head.")

Say, "You are standing tall and straight, steady and strong. Just like a tree, feel your roots growing from your feet, deep into the ground."

**As kids stay in the pose, you might say:**

- What season is it? Is there snow on your branches? Leaves? Flowers?
- It's getting windy. Try swinging your branches (arms). Now it's sunny. Feel the sun warming your bark (skin). Now it's raining (or snowing)! Feel the raindrops (or snowflakes) on your skin.
- Reach your branches (arms) wide, out to your sides. Feel the air around them.
- No matter the weather around you, feel your feet on the floor. Try to feel each toe. Your roots will keep you standing strong. Whisper to yourself, "I am growing!"
- Just as a tree is always growing, your body will always be moving a little to help balance you. You'll never keep totally still! Looking at one spot on a wall in front of you can help you balance.

