

# Managing difficult emotions (emotional regulation)

Strengthening their skills to manage difficult emotions such as worry, anger, or sadness can help children to cope with the stresses brought about by Covid-19 in a more positive way.

- 1. Deep belly breathing:** Sit in an upright position. Place your hands on your belly and take a deep breath in through your nose for four counts. Then exhale through your mouth for four counts. Feel your belly rise and fall. Repeat for a few minutes.
- 2. Bubble breathing:** Imagine you are outside blowing bubbles, hold your tub of bubbles, dip your bubble stick in, take a deep breath and blow as many bubbles as you can.
- 3. Play peaceful, relaxing music:** Encourage children to focus on their breathing while they listen.
- 4. Practise muscle relaxation:** Sit in an upright position or lie on the floor. Squeeze the muscles in the top of your legs, hold for three seconds, and let them go limp. Repeat for different parts of the body: imagine you're holding an orange and squeezing all the juice out with your hands. Stretch your arms out in front of you as if you are trying to catch something. Move your shoulders up to your ears. Pull in your tummy muscles. Wrinkle up your face. Relax your whole body as if you're a rag doll.
- 5. Do some yoga:** Research has shown that yoga can help to improve children's emotional regulation, mood and resilience. There are a range of videos on YouTube that you can use to practise yoga with children.