

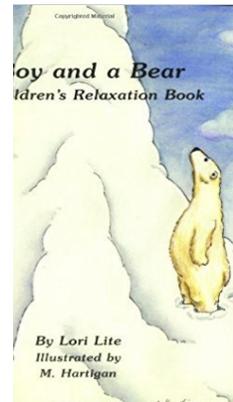
Book Review

Title: A Boy and a Bear: The Children's Relaxation Book

Author: Lori Lite

Recommended for Ages: 3-10

About: Teaching relaxation strategies



A Boy and a Bear, is a wonderful story that teaches young children how to relax and self soothe through circular breathing and visualization. The story is about a boy and a bear who decide to climb on opposing sides of a snow covered mountain. After climbing for some distance and feeling very tired, they meet atop a large rock. The boy quickly makes friends with the bear, inviting him to rest upon the large rock. While on the rock, they stretched out their bodies and enjoy the warm sun.

The boy shows the bear how to take deep breaths. The bear imitates the boy and carries out his own slow and deep breaths. As they are breathing they begin to count 2, 3, 4 in and 2, 3, 4 out. The boy uses a slow and long “ahh” to exhale. After some time repeating this breathing pattern, the boy starts to feel his mind and body become calm and relaxed. They both become so relaxed that they fall asleep.

This is an easy to read story, the author uses simple words and includes illustrations that make the story easy for children to follow along with. What I enjoy about this book is how the author encourages the reader, as well as the child to practice the breathing exercises along with the boy and the bear. This can be done as an activity with a caregiver and child, or even as a group exercise. Children often enjoy pretending to be the characters lying on their backs, breathing in and out and visualizing the warmth of the sun.

I recommend this book to teachers and caregivers to use with children who may feel over stimulated, have difficulties with napping or bed time, or need extra support in learning how to manage their anger (or any big feeling!). Children who know how to use self-calming techniques are more likely to cope adaptively when faced with challenges. Caregivers can talk with children and help them identify situations that may be helpful to practice breathing exercises. They can also help children really master this new skill by reminding children to take deep breathes, like the boy and the bear did, when the children need some extra support in calming down. A bonus to this book is that caregivers can also benefit from the relaxation techniques used in the book.

Reviewer:

Betsy Rivera Ruiz
Early Childhood Consultant
Early Childhood Consultation Partnership

