



S.T.O.P.

and

Relax®

Help children calm their bodies - so their brains can learn.

Practical Strategies for

Implementing S.T.O.P. and Relax®

Stoelting Co.'s S.T.O.P. and Relax® program is designed to help kids develop real, usable self-regulation skills—not just during structured sessions, but in everyday life. The key? Keeping it flexible, engaging, and responsive to each child's needs.

Great Times for S.T.O.P. and Relax®

Small, regular moments build long-term habits. Try integrating the S.T.O.P. routine, poses, or breathing into:

Therapy Sessions

- Start and end sessions with a breathing technique and pose
- Use the S.T.O.P. routine as a reset when emotions run high
- Incorporate lessons into group work to promote collaboration with two-person poses

The Classroom

- Begin the morning routine with a breath and a pose
- Build longer sessions into circle time or weekly social-emotional learning
- Create a yoga corner for kids to use independently

Routines/Transitions

- Cue the S.T.O.P. routine before entering new spaces or when moving between tasks
- Do a few calming poses after recess or lunch when energy is high

Keep it Real (Not Perfect)

You don't need a quiet, "ideal" environment. S.T.O.P. and Relax® teaches skills in real-life settings.

- No mats? Do standing poses.
- Busy room? Practice the S.T.O.P. routine while students are sitting.
- Limited time? Do a brief breathing exercise and a quick stretch.

Teaching kids to apply these skills in their actual environments enhances retention.

Have Fun and Be Playful!

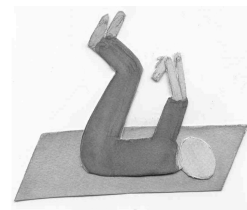
Focus on enjoyment first, skill-building second.

- Start sessions with fun, easier poses (e.g., Bug on Back, Shake it Out)
- Add creativity—encourage animal sounds during poses with animal names
- Create sessions with bonus time where kids can create/name their own pose (such as any stretch that feels comfortable to them)

Be Flexible in the Moment

Planning is helpful—but responsiveness is essential. Adjust sessions based on kids' energy, mood, and attention.

- Modify activities to meet kids where they are
- Shorten or extend plans depending on engagement
- Before tests, use calming lessons (Lesson 19) to help lower anxiety and increase focus.
- On slow days when students seem tired, pause teaching for a moment and try some poses from lesson 10 to boost energy.



bug
on back

Meet Kids Where They Are

Every child is different—and your approach to connecting with them should be too.

- Get on their level physically and emotionally
- Build connection before expecting regulation
- Always use a calm, supportive voice
- Notice subtle communication cues
- Promote interaction through play

For Kids Who Get Easily Frustrated

Learning relaxation skills is challenging—especially for anxious or perfectionistic kids.

Celebrate effort, not performance

- Let children know you're learning too
- Normalize that learning takes practice
- Emphasize that no one is perfect

Tailor to Individual Needs

Adapting to students' unique strengths and challenges is key to success.

- Modify poses for kids with motor challenges
- Use gentle, calm redirection for inattention
- Keep first sessions brief, slowly extending duration as kids build tolerance
- Provide visual cues, model movements step-by-step

Try reminding them:

- "We're all learning together, this takes practice."
- "There's no perfect way to do these poses."
- "All we are doing is trying our best."

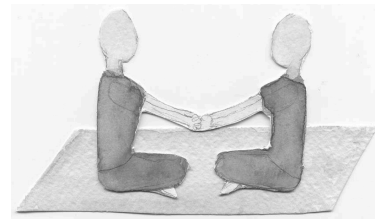
Encourage Cooperation and Connection

Make it social! Partner poses build connection, teamwork, and fun.

Pair up students for partner poses:

- Light the Candle
- See-Saw
- Parallel Breathing Tree

Relaxation can be a shared experience. Kids who have learned S.T.O.P. and Relax© often cue each other to use the S.T.O.P. routine.



Kids learn best when they feel seen, safe, and respected.

Send it Home to Generalize Learning

Consistency both at home and in school enriches children's learning experiences. Try:

- Sending home simple handouts
- Sharing the weekly pose each Friday
- Encouraging families to practice together

Establishing home routines can lead to kids practicing skills in two settings.

Get Creative and Go Beyond the Manual

One of the standout features of S.T.O.P. and Relax© is its flexibility. Create your own lessons and/or materials:

- Design mini S.T.O.P. cards and pose cards for students to keep in their desks or backpacks.
- Create a "Pose of the Week" bulletin board and allow students to vote on their favorites.
- Encourage a sense of agency by inviting students to volunteer to lead the class, group, or therapy session with some of their favorite poses.

Additional supports tailored to your students can enhance the routine, making it accessible and memorable.