

The Basics of Teaching Turtle

- Tell the Turtle Story. Explain why stopping and calming down is important.
- Teach the Turtle Technique and the 3 steps for calming down.
- Model the Turtle Technique repeatedly. Talk out loud about everything you are doing. Be sure you model breathing with your mouth closed and one long deep exhale.
- Young children tend to hold their breath or hyperventilate at first; both of which create tension instead of relaxation. Be sure to correct this.
- Focus on Twiggie's calming down. If you focus on his going into his shell, many young children will put their head and arms in their shirts to be silly instead of focusing on calming down.
- Help children learn appropriate times to Do Turtle by cueing them frequently and being liberal with praise and stamps.
- When prompting children to Do Turtle, use as calm and a reassuring voice as you can, so they understand that you are helping them to stay in control and not punishing them for not having strong feelings. Never demand that a child Do Turtle.
- Compliment children for any action that resembles Doing Turtle. They will not get it quite right at first.
- Praise and reward children for helping each other.
- Send the parent materials home so children can hear the story repeatedly and get reinforcement from parents. Follow up in person with parents to clarify if necessary.