



# Circles of learning

Education Health Environment Community Creativity

## Breathing

Incorrect breathing can be the cause of poor school performance, orthodontic problems, and increased incidence of colds, asthma and allergies. Restoring healthy breathing habits is an important way we can help our children look, feel and function better.

Children who breathe through their mouths develop a different facial structure to children who breathe nasally. Mouth breathing is associated with a narrowing of the upper and lower jaw, a lengthening of the face, underdeveloped jaw and dental crowing. As well as the orthodontic and aesthetic problems it may affect swallowing and speech patterns. When children overcome mouth breathing the face and dental arches begin to develop more normally and the posture and structure of the body improves, lessening the need for orthodontic treatment.

By optimising breathing one can improve the functioning of many systems in the body. The most obvious improvements in health that we can see in children who correct their breathing are a decrease in the number of colds and allergies, throat and ear problems and asthma attacks.

Another benefit of breathing exercises is that they can be used to train attention, concentration and focus and decrease stress in a similar way to meditation.

A simple exercise for you and your child is to focus on your breath, breathe deeply and think of your stomach as a balloon, now fill that balloon and see your stomach rise, then deflate the balloon. If you watch a baby breathing, see how their stomach rises up and down every time. Do this a few times a day and consciously avoid shallow breathing to ensure that your blood is being oxygenated.

Your brain and body cannot function without a good steady supply of oxygen.

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