



# NIKIFOR THE LION SENSORY-MINDFULNESS PACKAGE

SENSORY

REFLECTION

BREATH






MINDFULNESS





## THERAPEUTIC MASCOT



-  **Rustling the mane**  
Knead rhythmically
-  **Embroidery**  
Touch and massage with your fingertips
-  **Paws**  
Knot, grab, smooth out with fingers
-  **Feet**  
Tie together, tangle with paws
-  **Contrasting materials**  
Explore textures with your fingers

### Sensory interior

Dip your fingers, knead, press



### Pouch

Insert your fingers, stuff them,  
intertwine the paws and legs



### Body

Roll it up, put it on your tummy,



### Tail

Interweave, rub with your fingers



### Sensory pill

Run your fingers along the tail



# NIKIFOR THE LION

## SENSORY - MINDFULNESS PACKAGE



### Therapeutic weight mascot "Nikifor the Lion"

Nikifor the Lion is a Courageous Companion ready for development activities: he activates the sense of hearing, teaches the proprioceptive feeling of inhalation and exhalation, exercises fine motor skills, and exercises the child's lower back.

### Thinking Book "Plato the Cat and the Puzzle of Bravery"

The Thinking Book "Plato the Cat and the Puzzle of Bravery" supports mutual activation of the right and left hemispheres of the brain, building the understanding of mindfulness in the meaning of "here and now".

### Brochure with breathing and gymnastic exercises

In this brochure you will find information about possible ways to use the mascot for breathing exercises and relaxing the child's lumbar spine, as well as tips that will allow you to experience a satisfying adventure of finding your Bravest Bravery through an active conversation with the "Thinking Book".

**I hope that new experiences with sensory and mindfulness will allow you to discover a different form of play and support your child's development. Check additional information on the blog at [www.kotplaton.pl](http://www.kotplaton.pl)**





## BREATHING EXERCISES

# CAREFULLY OBSERVE YOUR BREATHING

Breathing exercises are one of the proven and effective tools that allow the child to discover his or her individual concentration on a specific moment - the "here and now" moment. Developing this type of focus in a child builds his/her general development capital in a safe way, minimizing the feeling of discomfort.

**Breathing is a super power thanks to which the child improves the quality of his concentration, returns to the comfort zone in stressful situations and consciously experiences present moments, mindfully interpreting his emotions and safely naming and defining the stimuli coming from the outside world.**

The following exercises consist of two elements: instructions for carrying out the exercise itself and tips on questions or terms that can be addressed to the child during the exercise. Use them to engage your child in mindful play or guide each stage according to your intuition, speaking your common language.

### Conscious observation of breathing

These are exercises that direct the child's attention to the natural course of the inhalation and exhalation process, i.e. noticing and observing the breath at a given moment. At this stage, we do not modify the breathing rhythm, we just carefully observe the way the air is inhaled and exhaled.

### Proprioceptive breathing with a weighted mascot

The effect of systematic breathing work with a weighted toy is the activation of deep sensation of the abdominal muscles during the breathing process. At this stage, the child actively and consciously works with the breathing technique and carefully modifies the course of the inhalation and exhalation process. By working with deep breathing, the child is able to cope with an uncomfortable situation on its own, bringing the body into a state of physiological respiratory balance.





## BREATHING EXERCISES

# CONSCIOUS OBSERVATION OF BREATHING

### Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.

- This may be your favorite position for lazing around, daydreaming or resting after a tiring day or activity.

### Bring awareness to your breathing.

- Notice what kind of breathing you rest comfortably with today: long, short, or maybe fast or slow? How do you feel when you breathe today? Are you calm? Upset? Happy? Sad? Or maybe scared? Your breathing is linked to your feelings. Notice what it's like here and now as you lie comfortably in a safe place. Notice what your breathing is like when you are sad, happy, angry, scared, and when you are calm and relaxed. Breathe carefully until you discover with what breath you are here and now with me today.

### Place your hands on your ribs and take a deep breath.

- Try to take a deep breath as if you were inhaling the scent of your favorite flower. Imagine what it smells like. Take a deep breath and exhale slowly. For a few breaths, bring your awareness only to your breathing. Notice how it is today: fast, slow, shallow or deep. Try to observe the moment when your ribs - under the influence of inhalation - spread to the sides and your chest fills with air. This is a sign that the breath has entered your body. It now fills every cell with the relaxing air of your favorite scent.

### Focus on the moment of exhalation.

- Gently open your mouth and, as you exhale, say the magically calming sound "hyyy" loudly. Feel the air leaving your chest with a "hyyy" and returning to the world around you. The air from your exhalation slowly fills the place where you relax with the super power of your mindfulness. Breathe for as long as you need. Watch the super power of your inhalation and exhalation work every time air enters your body and returns to the world. Once you become familiar with your exhalation, try to say the sound "hyyy" the next time you slowly exhale, but this time with your mouth closed and exhale through your nose.

### Place your left index finger under the two nostrils and bring your awareness to the temperature of your inhalation and exhalation.

- Observe the air you inhale and exhale. What temperature is it: is it warm or cold? Does the inhalation differ in temperature from the exhalation, or are they equally warm or cold?

### Plug the left nostril with your left index finger and place your right index finger just below the right nostril. Take a deep breath through the right nostril, wait 3 seconds. Then, close the right nostril with your right index finger, and take your left forefinger from the left nostril, place it under the open nostril and slowly release the air from it into the world.

- The super power of your inhalation and exhalation has its own temperature. Observe - using your finger under your open nostril - what the air feels like when you slowly and carefully inhale it into your body and exhale it back into the world. What kind of air comes to you? Warm or cold? What air comes out of your body and fills the world around you? Moist or maybe dry? Observe carefully what your own super power of conscious breathing is. Do not rush. Repeat the exercise for as long as you need.





## BREATHING EXERCISES

# PROPRIOCEPTIVE BREATHING WITH A WEIGHTED MASCOT

**Lie down in a comfortable position on your back. Place Nikifor the Lion on his tummy with his pocket facing up. Place the fingers of your left hand in the pocket. Use your right hand to find the pill in the Lion's tail. Move the pill up and down according to today's rhythm of inhalation and exhalation.**

- When you get comfortable, feel how your back touches the mat. Relax your legs. Place Nikifor the Lion on your tummy and feel its weight. Insert the fingers of your left hand into the Companion's pocket and rhythmically knead its interior as if you were kneading dough. Try to match the rhythm of pressing your fingers into the mascot to the way you inhale and exhale. Apply pressure as your intuition tells you. You know your breathing best and can match your finger movements to its current pace - no one else! Let Nikifor naturally rise and fall with the same breath as you come to the mat today. Don't correct your breathing, let it be as it is today, without any changes. Let the mascot make friends with your breath today as it is: happy, sad, angry, or maybe worried. Then, with either hand, grab the tail of Nikifor the Lion. Use your fingers to find the pill in it. Once you find it, try to move the pill up and down according to your breathing - the way it is today, here and now, when you lie comfortably on the mat.

**Moving the pill in the mascot's tail up and down - take a deep breath in and out.**

- When you are ready, inhale through your nose as if you were smelling the scent of your favorite flower and let the air into your body. Wait three seconds and exhale through your nose, saying "hyyy" with your mouth closed. If you can't say the magic "hyyy" with your mouth closed yet, that's okay. Open your mouth and say "hyyy" loudly and slowly. You'll see, at some point you'll have the super power to say "hyyy" without opening your mouth. Don't rush anything, just practice as you feel comfortable and pleasant at this moment "here and now". Once you become familiar with your breathing, direct your attention to the mascot and the pill into its tail. Feel how heavy it is. Notice how it rises and falls with your breathing. Use your fingers to feel the pill in lion's tail and move it slowly up and down in line with your breathing. Notice how you inhale and exhale together with the mascot? How do you feel letting Nikifor surf the wave of your breath on your belly? Breathe like this for as long as you need. Remember that you can invoke the super power of your breath in any situation: when you feel insecure, when you are sad, when you feel bad, when you are angry or when you are afraid of something. Breathe as you would during exercise. Nikifor is a great companion and helps you work with your breath whenever you need it. Take him with you and combine your super powers. Place Nikifor on his tummy or - if you can't - on your lap. Grasp the pill in the tail and move it up and down, bringing your awareness to your breathing. This is the super power of breathing that is always with you and will help you find a safe place as you inhale and exhale. May mindfulness be with you, my Courageous Companion.







## MINDFULNESS IN PLAY AND GYMNASTICS



### Advantages of playing with a weighted mascot

The effect of systematic breathing work with a weighted toy is the activation of deep sensation of the abdominal muscles during the breathing process. At this stage, the child actively and consciously works with the breathing technique and carefully modifies the course of the inhalation and exhalation process. By working with deep breathing, the child is able to cope with an uncomfortable situation on its own, bringing the body into a state of physiological respiratory balance.



## MASSAGE OF THE LOWER SPINE

**Lie comfortably on your back on the mat. When lying down, place the Lion Nikifor with the pocket upwards under the lower spine at the level of the sacrum. Place your arms loosely along your body. Point your palms towards the ceiling. Legs slightly apart, heels pointing inwards. Take a few deep breaths in and out according to the breathing instructions in the booklet.**

- Once you are comfortable with Nikifor the Lion under your lower back, bring your awareness to your body. As you inhale, tense each body part with all your strength, and as you exhale, relax. Start with the face. Take a deep breath as if you were smelling the scent of your favorite flower and tense all your facial muscles with all your strength. Then, as you exhale, say the sound "hyyy" out loud or with your mouth closed, release all tension and relax your face. In the same way, relax your arms, stomach and each leg in turn. Do not rush. Breathe at your own pace. Bring your awareness to your inhalation and exhalation as it is today. Don't judge him or try to change him. Make friends with your inhalation and exhalation.

**Stay on your back, bend your knees. Slowly start moving the lumbar spine on the mascot. Make alternating movements of your hips up and down. Then try to draw the shape of the number "8" on Nikifor.**

- Now direct your attention to the section of the spine that lies on the mascot. Slowly move the part of your body that is touching the mascot. Alternate movements up and down with each hip. Remember to inhale and exhale. When you tilt your hip up, take a deep breath through your nose, and when lowering your hip to the starting position, exhale while saying the sound "hyyy". Stay in the exercise for as long as you need. Bring your attention to every movement. How does your body feel while performing the exercise? Are there places where you notice a pleasant feeling of relaxation? Remember these places. Now change the body movement on the mascot. Try to draw the shape of the number "8" on it using the movements of your body. Do not rush. Write the number on Nikifor slowly, carefully and carefully. Pause in a place that you think requires you to press your body against the mascot to feel a pleasant feeling of relaxation. Exercise for as long as you need. Remember to breathe.

**Prop yourself on your elbows. Leave the mascot glued to the lower back. Make movements up and down using the section of the spine on which the mascot is placed. Don't let the mascot break away from the back.**

- When you support yourself on your elbows, remember that the Lion Nikifor is glued to the lower part of your spine. Inhale through your nose and roll the Lion up as if you were trying to tuck it under your back. Exhaling with the sound "hyyy", return to the starting position - straightening the Lion behind your back. Direct your attention to your back and notice the places that require additional pressing of the mascot to your body to create a feeling of pleasant relaxation. Remember these places and observe how your feeling of them changes with each repetition of the exercise. Repeat the exercise for as long as you need. Remember to make the up and down movements consistent with your intuition. They can be as you want: long, short, fast or slow - you decide on the rhythm and pace of your massage "here and now". Pay attention to your movements and notice whether the pace changes or remains the same with each repetition of the exercise.







## GYMNASTICS WITH THE LION NIKIFOR

**Pull the Lion out from under his back and place him on his tummy, pocket side up. Put your fingers in the pocket. Release your legs, heels inwards. Close your eyes. Take a few conscious breaths in and out with the mascot on your stomach. For greater comfort, you can place a rolled blanket under your knees.**

- While lying comfortably on the mat, place Nikifor the Lion on your tummy with the pocket facing up. Put your fingers in the pocket. Release your legs and turn your heels inwards. Close your eyes. Take as many deep breaths as you need to rest after exercising. Remember - inhale the air through your nose as if you were smelling the scent of your favorite flower. As you exhale, say the magic sound "hyyy". As you breathe, bring your awareness to your belly. Notice how he raises the mascot with the inhale and lowers it with the exhale. Remember that feeling of exhaling with the mascot. Make friends with him. While breathing, dip your fingers into the pocket inside the mascot. Feel the Lion rustle with every movement of your hands. What does this sound mean to you? Do you feel pleasant relaxation every time you dip your fingers into Nikifor? How does the mascot feel when you breathe? Do you enjoy it when Nsurfs on the wave of your breath? Breathe for as long as you need. This is time for you and your body. You decide when you feel relaxed and ready to open your eyes. When you are ready, open your eyes, gently turn to your chosen side and slowly - pushing yourself with your hand - sit comfortably on the mat. Thank yourself for taking time for yourself and your body. This is the most beautiful gift you can give yourself every day. May mindfulness of breathing be with you, my Courageous Companion!

### Support your child's development potential

Playing with a weighted mascot improves the process of sensory integration of the child's senses: hearing, touch, balance and deep feeling (proprioception).

Massage with Nikifor the Lion relaxes the lumbar spine, allowing the muscles to relax and regenerate. All forms of massage stimulate the child's psychophysical development and help build a close relationship with the parent.



## COLOR THE PLOT IN YOUR OWN WORDS

The Thinking Book "Plato the Cat and the Puzzle of Bravery" is written using two forms that help children develop: mind maps and a picture book. On the pages of the book, both methods intertwine - supporting the work of the right and left hemispheres of the brain - while learning about the adventures of Platon the Cat and the Courageous Companions. You don't read this book, you talk about it with the child, not using the author's words, but using the reader's phrases. This is where the super power of the book lies, which step by step helps you build a relationship with your child based on safety and trust.

The task of the parent, educator or therapist is to develop the entries written on mind maps using their own words, abbreviations or phrases that are important, personal and understandable to the child in his or her everyday life "here and now". The young reader, in turn, focuses on the illustrations - which stimulate the right hemisphere in terms of colors - and help him conduct a dialogue about the book's plot.

**The combination of two worlds: the visual world of a young reader with a gentle direction to the plot through the words of the caregiver, opens up a huge space of opportunities to get to know the child, yourself and, above all, spend valuable time together. The book is an unobtrusive invitation to open up and be mindful of each other.**



### Talk while reading the Thinking Pages

"Dorota Tomaszewska's Thinking Book in its title symbolically defines the direction of methodological research to facilitate the process of teaching a child about aspects of moral values. Referring to the theory of humanistic psychology and the character pedagogy (Gestalt) emerging from it, the author presents proposals for the situation of the hero - Cat Plato, in which the child can develop his/her best features without fear; using words and images, it provides the child, and at the same time the parent, with various ideas that enable conscious, creative, joint play/work that stimulates creative activities."

**dr Barbara Kutrowska**  
Lower Silesian University of  
Applied Sciences



READ CONSCIOUSLY

## HOW TO READ THINKING PAGES?

**Prepare your child to talk about the plot of the Thinking Book. First, choose any page of the book or let your child choose the page that interests him the most.**

- I suggest starting with the page with Your Courageous Companion. You can place the toy on your child's lap, tummy or allow him to play freely with the toy while reading a book. The mascot will allow the child to calm down and focus on the book. The tangible closeness of the book's hero will allow you to build step by step attentiveness to its content. If you only work with a book, let your child hold their favorite stuffed animal while reading. Also allow you to choose the page that will appeal to your little reader the most.

**Invite your child to dialogue with you: mentally read any entry on the mind map and recreate it for your child using your own words.**

- When quoting a map slogan, it is important that the words are understandable to the child at his developmental stage. Maybe these will be some special - known only to the child - mental abbreviations or diminutives? Among younger children, these may be syllables or onomatopoeias. It is important that talking about the entries on the map takes place in a comfortable environment with words that are child-friendly, easy to understand and interpret "here and now". It is an invitation to talk together in a safe world completely understandable to young readers.

**Carefully observe your child's reactions to your words, give him time to read the book without rushing. Develop ideas on mind maps in a way that is understandable to your child, using phrases that are simple and attractive at their developmental stage.**

- Give your child time when working with the selected page. Don't rush anything. Gently suggest what is happening in the book by explaining entries on mind maps - do not impose anything. Leave the child space for his own interpretation, observations and reflection. Silence and concentration are also welcome and sometimes very necessary to collect your thoughts and put them into a logical statement. Therefore, it is very important to give your child space and time to think about the plot of the book. Perhaps the illustration will tell the young reader something completely contradictory to the words on the map. Let it happen. At this point, you are building a relationship of mindfulness and showing your child that his or her receipt of the book is important to you. Focus all your attention on the "here and now" moment that you are experiencing together.

**Talk to your child about one page a day according to the tips above**

- You can read the book in chronological order or at random - choosing a page each day. The chronology of reading is not that important, because each page can be a separate story about the Bravest Brave. The most important thing here is the time spent together and mutual attentiveness to each other while sharing stories about the adventures of the book's characters.







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