

# Instructor Guidebook

# Broadway Madrigal

Cody Rounds and Jordan P. Novak

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# Introduction

This book introduces children to the practice of deliberately using the breath as a tool for self-regulation and emotional awareness, also known as *intentional breathing*. Intentional breathing is a widely used and effective technique that creates a calming physiological effect. It slows down an active mind, increasing focus, clear thinking, and relaxation.

When we get stressed or upset, we experience a fight, flight, or freeze response, which is a physiological reaction that causes nervousness within our minds and bodies. It speeds up our heart rate, makes our breathing shallow, and creates racing thoughts. This makes it difficult to think clearly or act rationally.

Intentional breathing interrupts the fight, flight, or freeze response, relaxing our body and slowing down our thought patterns. This allows us to choose a productive response to stressors rather than react from an emotional place. Besides boosting conflict resolution skills, it also helps develop good communication and overall self-esteem.

Children (and adults) should practice intentional breathing frequently so that it becomes an automatic response to stress and a lifelong tool. This guidebook suggests application opportunities to enable children to practice on a regular basis. It discusses several different kinds of breaths, which are also explained in the student book, each with a script to read aloud to guide children in the technique involved. Each breath also has its own discussion questions to engage children in deeper conversation, whether in a one-to-one discourse or in a group setting.

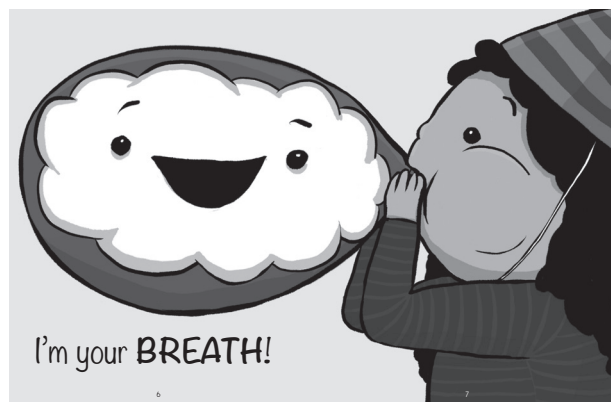
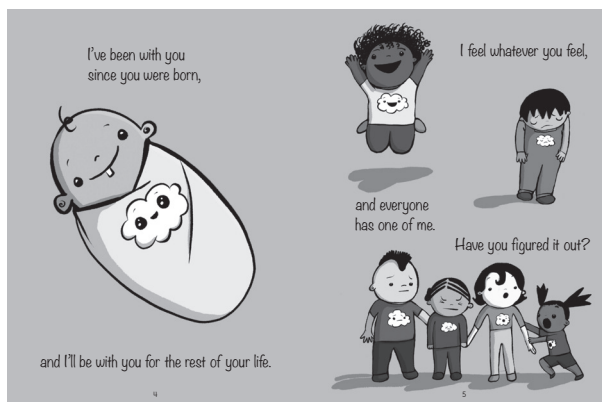
The student book can be read through in its entirety or segmented into lessons, with children practicing and implementing one or two kinds of breaths at a time. Optimally, children can participate in suggesting their own scenarios or breathing techniques in addition to the ones presented here.

# Pages 2 - 7

The breath, being invisible, may be an abstract concept for children. Many of them may never have given their breath any thought. The task in these pages is to get them to start thinking about their breath. Giving our breath a face allows us to see it as a potential “helper” or something that we can work with. This sets the understanding that the breath is always and immediately available to us, no matter the circumstances.

## Discussion Questions:

1. Using the clues provided in the first four pages, can you guess what the subject is?
2. Have you ever noticed your breath before? When?
3. What does your breath do for you?



# Pages 8 - 11

These pages begin to show how the breath is connected to emotion. Having children pay attention to their breath strengthens their emotional awareness and intelligence, giving them clues to what they may be feeling. Read each section slowly so they can follow along.

## Discussion Questions:

1. How does your breath help you to express emotion? (Examples: sighing, panting, huffing)
2. Can you tell what other people are feeling by their breathing?

