## MINDFULNESS ACTIVITY

The Hoberman Sphere

A Hoberman Sphere, or breathing ball, can help teach kids kids mindful breathing. It can be used to demonstrate how the lungs fill with air and expand on the in-breath, then contract with the out-breath. It also serves as a point of focus, or an anchor, for mindful breathing.

As the teacher slowly expands the sphere, inhale deeply and slowly through the nose and from the belly. The teacher then pauses, emulating the short, natural pause that happens at the "top" and "bottom" of each healthy breath. As the teacher contracts the sphere, everyone exhales through the nose slowly.
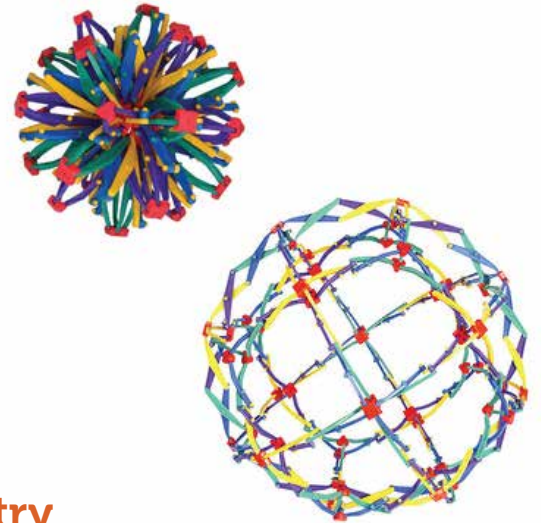
Three exercises to try

Demonstrate lungs: explain how the lungs expand and contract with the inhale and exhale, and how mindful, focused breathing can help us stay calm.

Self-Regulation: Leave the breathing ball in a quiet area of your class, on a desk or table for your class to use on their own. It's an engaging tool for self-regulation once kids know how to use it.

Follow the ball: Open and close the ball at a pace that emulates kids' actual breathing cycle. A steady, four-count inhale, slight pause, and four-count exhale is recommended as a cycle. Students age 6-11 should strive for 8-9 cycles in a minute; students age 12 and older should strive for 6-7 cycles in a minute.

Take 5ive Mindfulness, a free resource offered through Children's Hospital of Wisconsin's e-Learning program in partnership with Growing Minds, is a series of videos that offer guided exercises to develop mindfulness. **Visit missionhealthykids.org and click on the Take 5ive link to get started.**

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