

## BlowFish, Blow™ Activity Guide

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### **Why Is Breathing Well So Significant?**

Children who have processing issues frequently have a condition called “low muscle tone.” This can impact breathing muscles. Frequently, this means that, rather than using the diaphragm for breathing, the individual breaths shallowly. This puts the whole body on alert, making it difficult to attend and focus.

Good breathing can improve the clarity of speech. Certain sounds are based on the ability to grade respiration such as f, v, s, and z. Respiration is essential for putting the ending sounds on words.

Ironically, good breath support can even impact language production. It can make the difference between speaking in short phrases and speaking in full sentences.

In general, good respiration creates calm people, improves speech and improves language. The breathing products on these pages are frequently used by:

- Individuals diagnosed with attention and focus issues
- Children that have frequent respiratory infections
- Individuals with autistic spectrum disorders
- Those with speech delays
- Those with trouble eating or drinking
- Individuals that drool
- Individuals trying to use language but require refocus
- Classrooms where it seems the whole class needs calming down



### **Game Rules, Set-Up and Information**

#### **Rules:**

Rule number one is that every child is a winner! The goal of Blow Fish, Blow! is to strengthen the muscles used in breathing. Who knew this could be so much fun! The adult has the ability to adjust the variables to present the “just right” challenge to each child. Children who are just starting will benefit from the shorter lengths of tubing and can advance to the longer lengths as their respiration improves.

#### **Numbers of Players:**

One child can enjoy this game with delight. And in some situations, two or even three children may enjoy Blow Fish, Blow! together, while getting a full respiration workout! When the game components are moved to a larger space with water, more game players may be added.

#### **Ages:**

Preschool children enjoy the fish and frog activities, and children as old as 10 request the “fish game” each session! Do not use “Fish Food” confetti with kids who mix-up suck and breathe.

#### **Positions For Playing:**

Although it seems natural to sit or stand while playing Blow Fish, Blow!, in some situations, with appropriate flooring, it's possible for children to lie on their stomachs. Actually, this prone position is optimal for strengthening breathing muscles in the trunk called “accessory muscles”.

## Equipment:

Blow Fish, Blow! includes a clear plastic fishbowl, 5 goldfish, 2 frogs, lengths of non-toxic tubing, a floating lily pad, and “fish food” confetti.

## Safety:

This product contains small parts that pose choking hazards. Adult supervision is necessary at all times. All parts are non-toxic. “Fish food” confetti is not real food and should not be used with children who confuse blowing and sucking. “Fish food” should not be used without adult supervision.



## Set Up:

Fill fishbowl approximately 2/3 full of clean water. We recommend placing the fishbowl in a shallow pan or tray in case of spills. Keep paper towels handy too. Place game parts on a tray, and remove “fish food” if inappropriate for the children using the game. Stretch the non-toxic tubing with hands at either end. If the tubing continues to be curly, gently warming it with a hair blow dryer will significantly straighten the tubing.

## Ready, Set, PLAY!

Have the child place the fish in the water and watch them sink to the bottom, so the fish are “resting.” Then the child inserts the tubing so that one end is at the bottom of the bowl, and blows through the tube. Sustained blowing is best for building respiration muscles, but let the children experiment and play! As the child blows, the fish bubble and bob in response to the bubbles in the water. They’ll have a blast!

## Variations

### With Game Parts:

When children are fatigued from blowing, it is still possible to get them to engage for additional strengthening. Have the children float the lily pads on top of the water, and then carefully balance the frog on the lily pad. As the frog “jumps” in, the children start to blow because the fish are “excited” or “scared.” What a blast as everything is a swirl!

Again, if the children are fatigued from blowing, have them sprinkle “fish food” confetti into the water. Blow, blow, blow . . . “because the fish are so hungry!”

How long can each child blow bubbles in the water while counting out loud? See if they can top their best score.

### Apply Blow Fish, Blow! Parts To Additional Activities:

Play variations of Blow Fish, Blow! in the classroom with a group of children using an aquarium or a water table. Try disposable drinking straws if that size is appropriate for the water container size.

Variations of Blow Fish, Blow! are often used in bathtubs at home.

Make fishbowls or aquariums more realistic. Add a few drops of blue or green food coloring to the water, along with clean seashells or clean pebbles. Add non-toxic “seaweed” like lettuce, or plastic/silk greenery. Some children enjoy adding glitter or “sparkles,” while others enjoy smells created by adding flavorings such as banana, almond, vanilla, citrus etc.

Some children like their very own aquarium, which can be created from a clear one-liter soda bottle, or other similar container.

## **Our Favorite Resources:**

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### **Books:**

*M.O.R.E. Integrating the Mouth With Sensory and Postural Functions,*  
By Patricia Oetter, OTR, Eileen Richter, OTR, and Sheila Frick, OTR.

*Mouth Madness,*  
by Catherine Orr, OTR.

*Oral Motor Techniques in Articulation & Phonological Therapy,*  
by Pam Marshalla, SLP.

*Out of The Mouths of Babes – Discovering the Developmental Significance of the Mouth,*  
by Patricia Oetter, OTR, Eileen Richter, OTR, Sheila Frick, OTR, and Ron Frick, Parent.

*The Out-Of-Sync Child,*  
by Carol Stock Kranowitz.

### **Supplies:**

Integrations Catalog: [www.integrationscatalog.com](http://www.integrationscatalog.com) or 800.622.0638

Abilitations Catalog: [www.abilitations.com](http://www.abilitations.com) or 800.850.8602