

ACTIVITY

TAKE TEN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

A simple and powerful way for leaders to support staff by giving them a 10–15 minute break to step away, reset, and return refreshed.

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RECHARGE, REFOCUS, REIGNITE

Give your educators the quick reset they deserve with a simple idea: a 10–15 minute break during the day to breathe, recharge, and return ready.

When directors or leadership team members step in to cover a classroom, even briefly, it sends a powerful message—we see you, we value you, and we’ve got your back.

These small moments of relief can help prevent burnout, build trust, and keep your team grounded when things feel busy. Schedule short, intentional breaks throughout the year—especially during transitions, assessment checkpoints, or the holiday season—to make a meaningful impact in a small window of time.

A little break goes a long way— even superheroes need a snack and a breather!

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PREPARING THE ACTIVITY

Review your calendar: Look ahead a few weeks and identify 10–15 minute time blocks when you or another trusted team member (like a coach or assistant director) can step into classrooms.

Create your Take Ten schedule: Fill in the first column of the “Take Ten!” schedule with coverage times you can offer.

Decide how to rotate breaks. A few options:

- Rotate by classroom or age group each week.
- Randomly draw names
- Offer a sign-up sheet so teachers can choose a time that works best for them

Plan coverage activities: Choose simple, familiar activities that maintain a calm and happy classroom flow while the teacher steps out (see ideas on page 5).

Preview your introduction: See pages 6–7 for a sample script you can adapt when introducing Take Ten during a team meeting or through email.



Pro Tip: Use 10–15 minute increments throughout the year—especially during high-stress weeks or busier seasons.

KICK THINGS OFF!

Introduce the initiative: Share Take Ten! at a staff meeting or in your weekly communication. Explain that it's designed to support teacher well-being and help everyone take a moment to breathe during the day.

Explain the flow: Walk through how the rotating schedule works and what teachers can expect when it's their turn.

Highlight the "why": Emphasize that these small breaks can make a big difference—helping educators feel refreshed, focused, and appreciated.

Share the schedule: Post the Take Ten! schedule in a common area or share it digitally so everyone can see when coverage is available.

Welcome input: Invite feedback so the process feels smooth, supportive, and realistic for your center.

Pro Tip: While you're covering a classroom, leave a quick handwritten note of encouragement. A simple message can go a long way in making a teacher feel seen and appreciated.



FUN COVERAGE IDEAS FOR DIRECTORS & LEADERS

Even a few minutes in the classroom can be a joyful way to connect with children and give teachers a meaningful break. Try one of these coverage ideas during their Take Ten.

Story Time: Read a favorite picture book or sing your favorite children's songs with hand motions and sound effects.

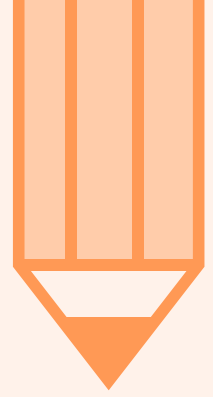
Give Me Five: Use our ready-to-go activity to spark fun conversations about favorites—snacks, colors, or animals!

Movement Story Adventure: Invite children to help you act out a simple, familiar story using movement, sound, and pretend play (i.e. Going on a Bear Hunt).

Would You Rather?: Play a round of "Would You Rather?" tailored to preschoolers—think "Would you rather hop like a bunny or stomp like a dinosaur?"

Stretch + Breathe: Lead a few stretches, gentle yoga poses, or breathing exercises to help everyone reset.

EXAMPLE SCRIPT TO SEND TO YOUR STAFF



Subject: Introducing Take Ten – Because You Deserve a Pause

Dear Team,

I'm excited to share a new way we're supporting each other this season: **Take Ten**.

Take Ten gives each educator a 10–15 minute break during the day to pause, breathe, and reset. A member of the leadership team will step in to cover your classroom so you can step away—guilt-free and uninterrupted.

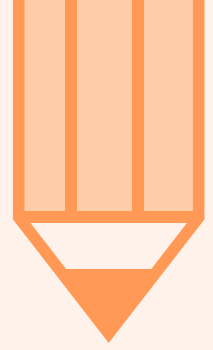
We'll rotate breaks throughout the staff, and you'll see a posted schedule each week with your time slot.

These short breaks are a simple but powerful reminder that your well-being matters. When we make space for ourselves, we come back to our classrooms calmer, clearer, and more connected.

Thank you for everything you bring to this community every day. You deserve this moment to take ten.

Warmly,
[Your Name]
[Your Title]

EXAMPLE STAFF MEETING SCRIPT



"I want to introduce something simple we're starting here at [Center Name] called **Take Ten**.

The idea is straightforward: each of you will get a 10–15 minute break during the day—just a little window to step out, breathe, and reset. During that time, a member of the leadership team will cover your class so you can truly take a moment for yourself.

I know how much heart and energy you pour into your work every day. Take Ten is our way of saying, 'We see you, we appreciate you, and you deserve a pause.'

We'll rotate coverage so everyone has a turn, and we'll post a schedule so you can see when your break is coming up. If you have questions or ideas, please share them—I want this to feel supportive and realistic for you.

A few minutes can make a big difference. When we care for ourselves, we're better able to care for the children and families we serve. So, thank you for all you do—and please, take ten when it's your turn."

TAKE TEN: CREATIVE TWISTS & TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERS

PAIR IT WITH A "TAKE TEN" BASKET

Create a small Take Ten basket that directors bring to each classroom when covering.

Include little touches like:

- A granola bar or chocolate square
- A sticky note with a kind message ("You are making a difference.")
- A small lotion or tea packet
- A funny meme or affirmation card

Bonus Tip: Rotate who contributes to the basket each week—invite families or staff to add small, inexpensive items. It becomes a shared act of care.

THEME IT BY SEASON OR MOOD

Keep the experience fresh by adding a light theme each month or season:

Autumn Pause: Include pumpkin spice tea and cozy affirmations.

Winter Warm-Up: Hand out hot cocoa packets and warm gratitude notes.

Spring Reset: Add a small flower, seed packet, or a note that says "Bloom where you are."

Summer Recharge: Play calming instrumental music or give out popsicles for a sunny pick-me-up.



OFFER FLEXIBLE “TAKE TEN” MOMENTS

Make It Personal: Some teachers may prefer several 5-minute pauses throughout the day instead of one longer break. Be open to adjusting based on what feels most restorative for each person—quiet time, connection time, or creative time all count.

The goal isn't perfection; it's permission to pause in the way that truly helps them reset.



USE “SURPRISE TAKE TENS”

Every once in a while, make it spontaneous! Step into a classroom unannounced and tell the teacher, “Surprise! It’s your Take Ten—go grab a coffee or a quiet minute outside.”

These surprise moments feel extra special and remind teachers that support can show up unexpectedly, too.



ADD A “REFLECTION OPTION”

For educators who like to use their Take Ten for quiet reflection, offer optional journal prompts or mindfulness cards in the staff room, **such as:**

- “What moment made you smile today?”
- “What are you grateful for right now?”
- “How did a child surprise you today?”

Even a short reflection can deepen awareness and appreciation.



KEEP A "TAKE TEN BOARD"

In the staff room, post a Take Ten Board where teachers can:

- Write short thank-yous to whoever covered their class.
- Share how they used their time ("Sat in the sun for 10 minutes!").
- Add an encouraging note for a teammate.

It's a lovely, visual reminder that small pauses make a collective impact.



KEEP THE SPIRIT ALIVE

Once Take Ten becomes part of your culture, keep it fresh by checking in:

- "How's Take Ten feeling for everyone?"
- "What would make it more helpful?"

Sometimes just asking the question reminds staff that their voices matter—and that well-being is a shared priority, not a passing trend.



FINAL THOUGHTS FOR LEADERS

You can also use Take Ten as a **temperature check**—an opportunity to notice classroom rhythms and staff well-being.

After each round, jot down reflections like:

- Which teachers seem most in need of a breather?
- When are stress levels highest during the week?
- What small adjustments could support smoother days overall?

This turns Take Ten into both **care and insight**—helping you lead with empathy and awareness.

When educators have a moment to pause, children benefit too. A calm, cared-for teacher creates a calm, cared-for classroom.

Take Ten is a simple way to say: **You matter.** Your well-being matters. And **we're in this together.**



TAKE TEN IN IN-HOME CHILDCARE SETTINGS

For in-home providers, Take Ten doesn't have to mean stepping completely away—it can be about creating small, intentional pauses that help you recharge right where you are.

Micro-Moments of Pause

- If a full 10–15 minute break isn't possible, aim for mini resets throughout the day—even 2–3 minutes can help. Try:
 - Stepping just outside the door for three deep breaths while children safely watch from inside.
 - Turning on a calming song and stretching together.
 - Closing your eyes and taking a "quiet sip" of coffee or water before transitions.

Think of it as a reset in motion—small, steady pauses that protect your energy all day long.

Partner Up with a Trusted Backup

- If you have an assistant, co-provider, or substitute who visits occasionally, schedule a weekly Take Ten trade:
 - One person covers while the other steps away for 10–15 minutes, then switch.
 - Use a consistent day and time so it becomes part of your rhythm rather than an afterthought.

Even once a week is powerful when it's predictable.

Build "Quiet Corners" into the Day

- Design the environment so you can step back without fully stepping out.
 - Create a calm play zone (puzzles, books, sensory bins) where children are safely engaged.
 - Use this time to sit nearby, sip water, breathe, or jot a quick note of gratitude.

Label it for the children as "Quiet Play Time," so it feels routine rather than a disruption.

Set Up a Parent Swap

If you have strong family partnerships, invite parents to participate in a Take Ten support rotation.

- A parent volunteer or grandparent can come read a story or help with snack time once a month.
- This gives you a genuine moment to regroup and models community care for families, too.

Be sure to follow all licensing and safety guidelines when arranging coverage.

Use Rest Time as Your Built-In Take Ten

During nap or rest periods, resist the urge to dive straight into paperwork or cleaning. Instead:

- Take your own "Take Ten" first. Sit, breathe, stretch, or step outside with a cup of tea.
- Set a timer if needed so the moment doesn't slip away.

This mindful pause can shift the whole afternoon's tone.

Create a "Take Ten Corner" for Yourself

Just as children have cozy nooks, create a mini corner for you—maybe a small basket with:

- Calming tea or a snack
- An affirmation card
- A notepad for reflection
- A favorite photo or scent

Even seeing it reminds you: your well-being belongs here, too.

Make It a Community Commitment

If you're part of a family child care network or association, suggest a Take Ten Circle:

- Providers check in weekly (in person or online) to share how they took their "ten."
- Offer each other encouragement and fresh ideas for micro-breaks.

It turns self-care into shared care.

Practice "Together Breaks" with Children

Model self-care as part of your program culture:

- "Our bodies have worked hard—let's all take a Take Ten together!" Then try:
 - Stretching, deep breathing, or mindful listening ("What sounds can we hear right now?")
 - Quiet reading time with soft music

Children learn regulation with you, and you still get a moment to exhale.

End-of-Day Reflection Ritual

Before you clean up or start notes, take a gentle pause:

- "What's one thing that went well today?"
- "What made me smile?"

This five-minute reflection helps you reset before transitioning back to home life.



Even if Take Ten looks different in a smaller setting, the heart of it remains the same: creating **mindful moments** to step out of doing and back into being. When you fill your own cup, you pour **calm** and **joy** right back into the children's day.

TAKE TEN! SCHEDULE



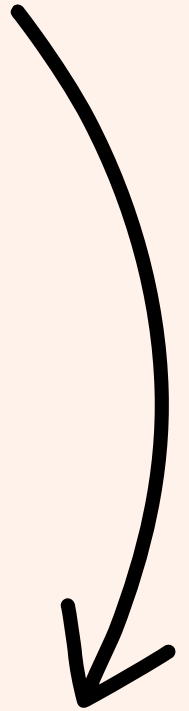
Date & Time Slot	Teacher Name	Class Location	What would you like me to do with your students during that time?
<u>Example:</u> Mon. 9/24, 8:30-8:40 AM	Ms. Mary	Butterfly room	Please introduce yourself and ask them the Question of the Day

Date & Time Slot	Teacher Name	Class Location	What would you like me to do with your students during that time?

TAKE TEN!

Editable Template

Date & Time Slot	Teacher Name	Class Location	What would you like me to do with your students during that time?



**YOU'RE A ROCKSTAR
BECAUSE...**



**YOU'RE A ROCKSTAR
BECAUSE...**



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BECAUSE...**



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BECAUSE...**





THANK YOU!!



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THANK YOU!!

**HOW I USED
MY TAKE TEN...**



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TAKE TEN REFLECTION PROMPTS

A moment that made you smile today...

What's one thing you did today that made your classroom feel calm, joyful, or connected?

What are you grateful for right now?

What helps you feel grounded during a busy day?

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TAKE TEN!



TAKE TEN BASKET



TAKE TEN CORNER



TAKE TEN BOARD



COLLABORATION

BUILT BY EDUCATORS, FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

This resource was created in collaboration with dedicated educators and school leaders who brought their experience, ideas, and insight to every step of the process. We're grateful for their partnership in building tools that truly make a difference in schools.



Abbey Sualy

Early Childhood School Psychologist
Omaha, NE

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