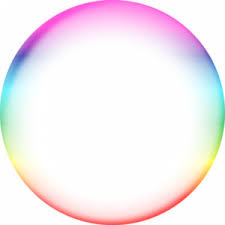


**COHEN-HARRIS“HOSEN”**

CENTER

A PROJECT OF THE ASSOCATIONFOR AT-RISK CHILDREN (REGISTERED NON-PROFIT)



**"Emotional Protected Space"**

**From Stress to Functionalty**

**During Emergencies**

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**We are resilient!!!**

**Coping with the Situation**

Dear Parents,

We are sure that during this current situation you have many worries and uncertainties.

Parenthood is a daily challenge and is fraught with unique trials; during an emergency, numerous potential difficulties can arise.

We would like to equip you with several tools to help you cope with the present emergency, which are suitable to the various needs that your children may have. Each child is different from others, and every child is a complete world of capabilities, potential, and needs; thus, there is no one method or recommendation that will suit each one. You as parents know your children better than anyone, but we can add, and refine, several suggestions and principles for behavior and coping.

Feeling “Normal” in an Abnormal Situation

and Becoming Functional

The current security situation is not a “normal” situation, and therefore it is **important to provide legitimacy to feelings of fear and anxiety, and to our own different reactions to the situation and those of our children.** Furthermore, it is important to understand that **legitimacy is only the first step that facilitates the next one – becoming functional.**

It is “normal” to feel stressed and troubled, which sometimes can lead almost to a state of paralysis. However, accepting this feeling can assist us not to remain in that state, and encourage us and our children to move on to a condition of functionality. **Acceptance of the difficulty, together with encouraging self-directed action, facilitates the transition from stress to functionality.**



Be tolerant of a child’s atypical reactions and behaviors.

Children sense changes in their surroundings, and it is likely that they sense, at some level, the stress that exists around them, even if you do everything possible to remain calm.

Therefore, **it is possible, and even probable, that children will express their feelings or fears through different types of behaviors.**

We sometimes see children who, in the past, exhibited certain behaviors, revert to those behaviors even though they had discontinued or outgrown those same behaviors.

We sometimes see **more non-cooperative behaviors:** in entering the protected space, in dressing, eating, everyday activities, etc.

These are all areas in which the child can “have his say” and attempt to create control over a situation of uncertainty.

During these turbulent times, it is worthwhile to minimize confrontation with the child and be as tolerant as possible. However, be careful not to create a situation in which you give in to the child too often.

**Children need boundaries and stability that they can rely on, otherwise they experience anxiety and confusion.**

**Parents are the Center of the Child’s World**

During the current situation, children have only a partial understanding and awareness of the situation and the threat that we face. In most cases, when parents project calm and control, the children will react more reasonably. **Children are more sensitive to your body language, your physical movements, facial expressions, and muscle tone.** Therefore, it is very important to be aware of your feelings and reactions.

It is a good idea to spend a few minutes every day doing breathing and relaxation exercises, to be careful about eating and sleeping as regularly as possible, to do physical activities, and other calming pursuits. It can be beneficial to share your worries with relatives/friends/a telephone helpline at a time when your children are not present; even if you think the children do not understand, they do comprehend and sense in their own way.

**The more you can maintain a calm and composed appearance, the more this will be projected to the child.** During stressful moments, try to remain as centered and quiet as possible. It is useful to refrain from raising your voice. **Sometimes it is Dangerous and Sometimes it is Just Scary**

It is very important to differentiate between a **dangerous situation** – during which we must undertake actions to cope or do **external work**, and a **frightening situation** in which it is necessary to do **internal work** such as breathing or other calming exercise.

For example – when we hear a siren, we are talking about a dangerous situation, during which we must do external work- i.e., get to a protected space. However, once we are inside the protected space the danger subsides, and only fear remains. In order to cope with the fear it is necessary to do internal work to help ourselves return to a state of balance, for example, to breathe slowly, do exercises in which we tense and release muscles, identify unbalanced thoughts, etc. (further in this booklet there are detailed explanations of several tools that can help restore balance).

Although it is unpleasant to hear a siren, it does have an important function- it guards us and directs us to a protected space, where there is no longer any danger, and even if we still feel fear we can attempt to cope with it in various ways.

**Remember that it is not necessary to conquer fear, it is only necessary to cope with it; a brave person is one who deals with fear, not someone who is not afraid.**

**Explain to children the difference between danger and fear, and especially the difference between methods of coping between the two:**

**Danger- external action that causes us to get to a safe place.**

**Fear – Internal action that helps us to return to a state of balance.**

**Daily Schedule for**

**Maintaining Orderly Life**

There is no question that sirens and the unexpected behavior that they cause do not permit leaving the house, and therefore complicate managing the household. Nevertheless, **try to maintain a daily routine. It is advisable to create a written schedule or draw one with your children.** You can also involve other family members.

The motiviating principle is that the **children need to maintain, to the extent possible, a fixed, daily order.** Even if the timetable is not adhered to absolutely, the order of activities is important; a shower is after playtime, and following that is dinner, etc.

It is strongly recommended to display the daily schedule to the children. For example, you can prepare cards and hang them in the living room and shelter.

You can even create a special poster that demonstrates the sequence of action during a siren- this is something that can provide more of a mutual “game” aspect and make the actions less threatening as they repeat themselves.



**A Little Less News…….**

News reports are for your eyes and ears only!

**Not only is a television on at home all day at full volume inappropriate and unhelpful for children, it is also liable to harm them and add stress and tension with frequent sounds and sights of distress.** Update yourselves by listening to news with earphones or viewing news on a computer, and keep to a minimum the news broadcasts to which children are exposed.

**It is worthwhile to maintain a quiet atmosphere at home, which will help children stay calm.**

It is important to remember that while kindergartens are closed now, they will reopen again and all the children and staff will return. It is a good idea to remind the children at home of the names of the staff and children; perhaps together you can do drawings or other projects with this in mind. However, be aware that children in any case are exposed to particular information through conversations with family members. Therefore, it is important, to the extent possible, to supervise such conversations.

Pleasant Music, Games, and Everything that You Like….

There are methods you can use at home for keeping things calm such as playing quiet music for certain times, and being sensitive to your children’s reactions (make sure the music is also calming for them). You can change the music occasionally, and even allow the children to help choose. It is a good idea to play music without lyrics, and that has a pleasant melody, which has greater potential to be relaxing**. Similarly, in order to make the home a more conducive place for play, it should be easier to be there and do activities**. You can make a “pillow corner” with a mattress and blanket and add soft furnishings such as fabric and even things like sponges, brushes, etc. according to your imagination and the child’s tastes. **This could become a place where you spend time with the child and have discussions while doing pleasant sensory activities**.

**Turn the protected space into a playroom**.

Unfortunately, it is necessary to spend time in the protected space; therefore it is worthwhile to make it friendlier and less threatening for children. Put a variety of toys and books inside that the child likes, that can keep the child busy, and help the child feel secure. You can allow the child to choose the things to put in the protected space, to a reasonable extent. You can also decorate the space; some suggestions include painting, drawings, stickers, and any other activities appropriate for you and your children. You can display your children’s work and even show it to other family members. This will help reinforce the child’s feelings of security.

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**Stressful Situation?**

**A Few Tips to Change the Mood**

A prolonged stay at home with no possiblity of going outdoors is not easy. You can be creative and and encourage your child to do energetic activities while maintaining safety. Very young children often do not understand why they cannot leave the house; they are unused to spending long periods in the same place.

It is necessary to find ways to keep them active in the house for short periods (10-20 minutes) through activities such as jumping, rolling, and games with balls. Following intensive physicial activity it is important to transition gradually to more calming activity. You can dim lights, quiet the surroundings, and gradually slow the pace. (Further down you will find instructions for breathing exercises and gradual muscle relaxation).

Games, books, and films are especially relevant during situations in which you or your children feel that thoughts or worries are overwhelming.

It is advisable to encourage the use of humor – for example you can have a “funniest joke contest” or the “most embarrassing moment” with your family.



**Hug, Hug, and Hug Again**

During the current situation both you and your children need more contact, expressions of closeness, and love. You can facilitate this, but keep in mind that everyone needs a different level of contact**. It is very important to initiate and encourage closeness with your child, while preparing the child for your intentions and respecting the child’s needs and feelings.** Some possiblities include massaging the child following a shower, carressing the child with a towel, “drawing” on the child’s back, hugging, tickling, or any other physical activity that the child enjoys and that is age-appropriate. Be aware of the different needs of the child concerning sleep-time arrangements and allow special requests that you would not normally consent to during routine times.

Everyone Has a Job

Every person hopes with all their heart that the current security situation ends soon. However, we must be prepared for the state of affairs to remain ongoing, and it is necessary to think in terms of organization, planning, and proper distribution of resources. There is no point in wasting resources such as your time and attention. Assuming that you are at home with your family, including older children, allow yourself to assign tasks and make sure that every family member has a half hour of ‘recreation time’ without a job to do.

Similarly, it is recommended to give each child a job, for example, bringing pets or parents’ cell-phones into the protected space. A job creates the experience of control in a situation in which control is very limited, and is very important.

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**Make** **Room for Feelings**

It is advisable to encourage your children to share their thoughts and feelings with you, and to feel comfortable asking questions that trouble them.

When you or your children **think extreme thoughts, instead of treating them as facts, try instead to relate to them as present feelings,** and instead of denying the feelings, think about what would improve them-- different actions at that moment can help in many cases. (Further down is an explanation of how to so in a “four-step model.”) For example, if your child says, “this security situation is never going to end,” validate that this is how the child feels **at that moment**, and that this is, in fact, a negative feeling, and allow the child to move on and **concentrate their focus on an activity** that they find interesting. Do not try to convince the child that they are mistaken.

*Dear Parents,*

*While you do have to serve as a model for your children, you are not expected to be completely immune.*

*It is permissible, and appropriate, for you to let your children know that you also feel uncertain, but that you cope with your worries, just like they can also cope. You sometimes also need to take a break. Save your energy to the extent that you are able.*

*Remember that your children see the world through you, and that there is great significance to your actions..*

*Prepare yourself so that you can function and withstand the challenges during these difficult times, and this way your family members will be forgiving with themselves when they react in a human way.*

*If you are aided by some of the guidelines presented here and integrate them into your home life, we hope and believe they will help to ease your situation somewhat.* 

*Following is an explanation of several tools and techniques you can use with your children during the day, in relevant situations, and while in the protected space.*

**“Family Resilience Swing”**

During the present state of affairs, many of us experience **difficulties, fears, and worries, some of which are, and some are not, connected to the security situation. At the same time,** we all have **tools and resources** for coping, during routine times and during emergencies. We can see the balance between difficulties and our coping resources with the help of an image of a swing or scales.

On one side are the things that both strengthen and test – we can call them “challenges.” On the other side are the range of familiar tools and methods that help us cope with the challenges.

One of the goals of this booklet is to remind us of our resources and strengths, and even to compel us to identify and learn new skills for coping with challenges.

Sometimes, the correct way to achieve balance is to use a tool, such as to breathe slowly against the stress, or to ask for help. Other times we can balance the scales by minimizing the challenge and difficulties, for example, to go to sleep with a child when it exceptionally difficult for the child to fall asleep alone.

**Creating a Family Resilience Swing**

**Instructions**

Prepare in Advance:

Small stones/Styrofoam balls/pieces of wood/pebbles, etc.

Notepaper and stickers/permanent markers

Two baskets/plates or other material for creating scales

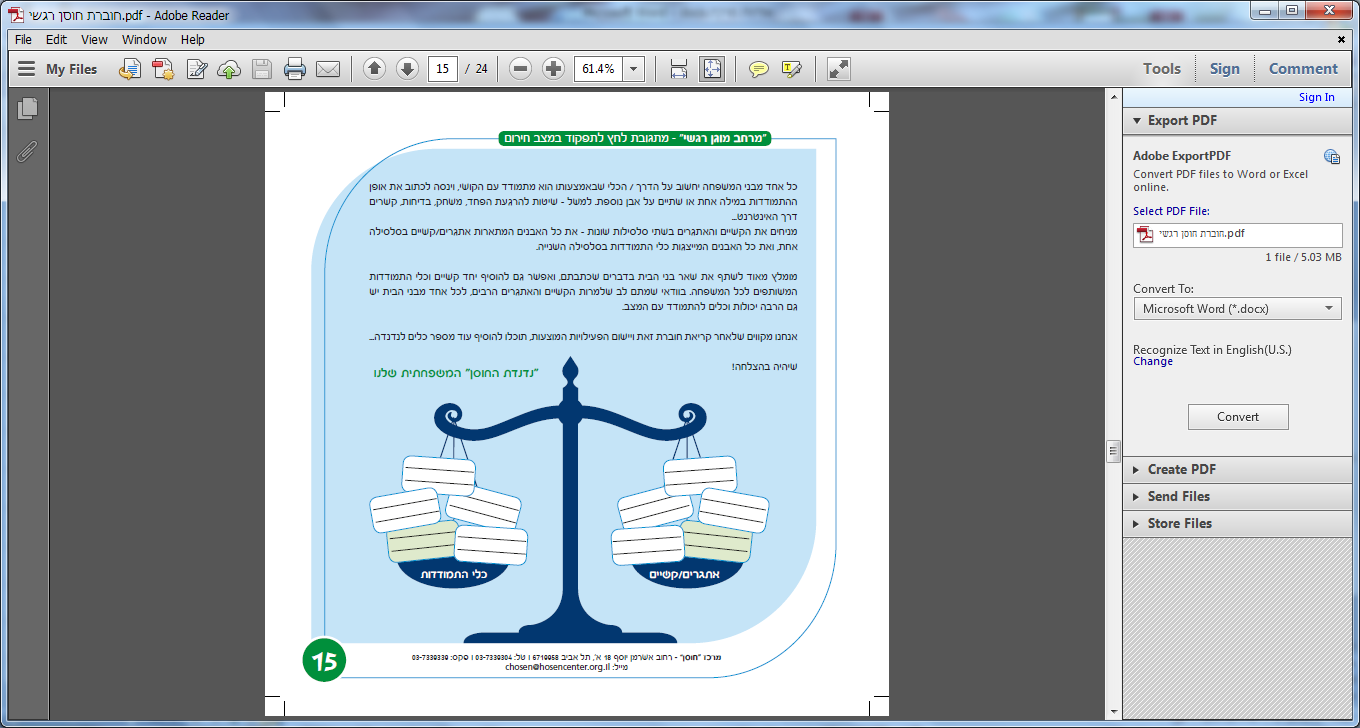
Each family member is asked to think about a specific difficulty they are currently coping with, and write it on a stone. For example – fear when hearing a siren, difficulty staying the protected space for a long time, cancelled summer camp/social events/get-togethers because of the security situation, economic difficulties because of the situation, etc.

**Each family member has to think of a method/ tool that they can use to cope with the difficulty** and try to write the coping method in one or two words on another stone. For example- a method of coping with fear- -games, jokes, online connections …

Place all of the stones with the challenges and difficulties in one basket and all of the coping methods in the other. **It is highly recommended to involve all of the family members in writing the challenges with you, and allow them to add more of the difficulties and coping methods shared by the family.**

**You will definitely notice that despite the many difficulties and challenges, each member of the household also has many abilities and tools for coping.**

We hope that after reading this booklet and trying out the activities you will add more activities to the scale…



When we are under stress, and want to be calm and balance our body, one method for doing so is to contract and relax all of our muscles. Even if we don’t necessarily feel that our body and muscles are tense, after we do this exercise we feel very released. Don’t forget any important muscle group.

**Gradual Muscle Tensing and Releasing**

It is a good idea to print these instructions, and to practice with family members and friends. It is possible to do the exercises as presented here, as an entertaining game; another option is to simply contract and relax different muscle groups, twice for each group. The first time contract more strongly, and the second time do not tense as hard (for example, make a fist, raise shoulders, wrinkle your face, pull in your stomach muscles, push lower back towards the seat of your chair, raise legs and flex toes).

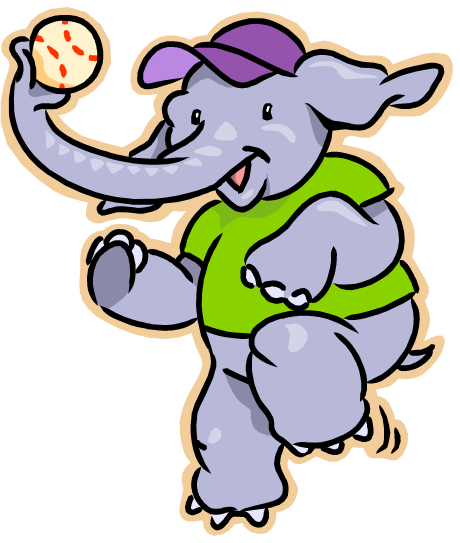


Pretend that you have half a lemon in each hand. Squeeze each half hard. Try to get all the juice out of each half. Feel the tension in your hands and fingers while you squeeze. Now remove the lemons. Notice how your hand muscles feel when they are released…. Take two more lemon halves and squeeze them as well, except this time with very little effort. Good. Just a bit. Good, now relax and let the lemons fall from your hands…

Now imagine that you are a furry, lazy cat that wants to stretch. Tense your hands in front of you. Lift them high above your head. All the way over and behind. Feel the stretch in your shoulders. Stretch higher. Now let your arms fall back to your sides. Good cats, let’s stretch again. Stretch your arms in front of you. Raise them above your head. Stretch them back again, pull hard. Now let them fall quickly. Notice how your hands feel even more released.



You have a giant piece of chewing gum in your mouth. It is very hard to chew. Bite it. Hard! Let your tongue muscles help you. Now rest. Simply let your jaw open freely. Notice how good it feels to let your jaw fall free. Now let’s concentrate again on chewing the gum. Bite it again, but this time not as hard because now it is not as tough. Good. You are chewing easily without any special effort. Now rest again. Simply let your jaw relax. You feel good just from the release and because you don’t have to struggle with the gum. Try to rest your entire body. You defeated the gum. Let yourself relax as much as you can.

Now you are being bothered by an annoying fly. It lands on your nose. Try to get it off without using your hands. Good, you crinkled your nose. Do this as many times as you can. Squeeze your nose hard. Notice that when you contract your nose, your cheeks, mouth, forehead, and eyes help you. They also contract. When you release your nose, the rest of your face also releases and that is a nice feeling. Good. You’ve gotten rid of the fly. Now release your nose.

Oops, its back. Right in the middle of your nose. Contract your nose again. Get rid of the fly. Squeeze your nose, but this time gently. You know that a gentle squeeze is enough to get rid of it. Keep your nose compressed for a short time. Good, it’s gone. You can release your face. Now you can just relax. Let your face smoothen, without any tension anywhere. Your face feels nice, smooth, and calm.

Hey! Here comes a cute baby elephant! It seems that he is not paying attention where he is going. He doesn’t see you lying on the grass and is about to step on your stomach. Don’t move. You don’t have time to get out of his way. Just prepare yourself. Tense your stomach muscles in case he steps on them. Contract the muscles hard. Strengthen them.

It looks like he’s going the other way. You can relax now.

Let your muscles loosen. Release them as much as you can. Now they feel better. Oops, he’s coming back. Get ready. Contract your muscles. Hard. If the baby elephant steps on you while your stomach is hard it won’t hurt. Make your stomach a rock. Good, he’s going away again. You can relax now. He’s going away for good. You can completely relax. You are safe. Everything is okay and you can feel nice and calm. Notice the difference between a contracted stomach and a relaxed stomach. That is what we want to feel- good, released, and calm.

Now imagine that you are **standing barefoot in a big mud puddle**. Dig your toes deep into the mud. Try to get your feet all the way to the bottom of the mud puddle. Use your leg muscles to push. Push down, separate your toes, feel the mud between them. Now get out of the mud puddle. Release your legs. Let your toes release and feel how good it is to be released.

Get back into the mud puddle. Splash with your toes. Let your muscles help push your feet down. Push your feet. Hard. Good. Now get out. Release your leg muscles, your feet, and your toes. It feels so good to be released. No tension. You feel warmth and pleasantness. Allow yourself to remain calm for a while. Now you can put one hand on your stomach and breathe a few slow breaths. Relax your body for one minute.

**Let your body relax and feel that all your muscles are released.** In a short while you will have to open your eyes and that will be the end of this session. As you get through the day, remember how good it was to feel released. Sometimes you have to feel more tension than you generally do, before you can be calm, like we felt during the exercises. Now very slowly, open your eyes and slightly tense your muscles. Very good. You did good work. You are champions of relaxation.

Practice these exercises every day in order to be calmer. It is a good idea to do them at night, after getting into bed, when the lights are off and nobody is bothering you. It will help you to forget about your worries, get rid of the tension in your body and make it easier to fall asleep. When you learn this method and are able to relax, you can help yourself relax at school and at other places. Just remember the lemon, the fly, the elephant, the gum, and the mud puddle, and you can relax right away. Today is a good day and you are ready to feel very released.

**Slow Breathing**

**Think of 3 more images that you can use to practice contracting and relaxing muscles: (such as: lemon half, furry cat, chewing gum, etc.).**

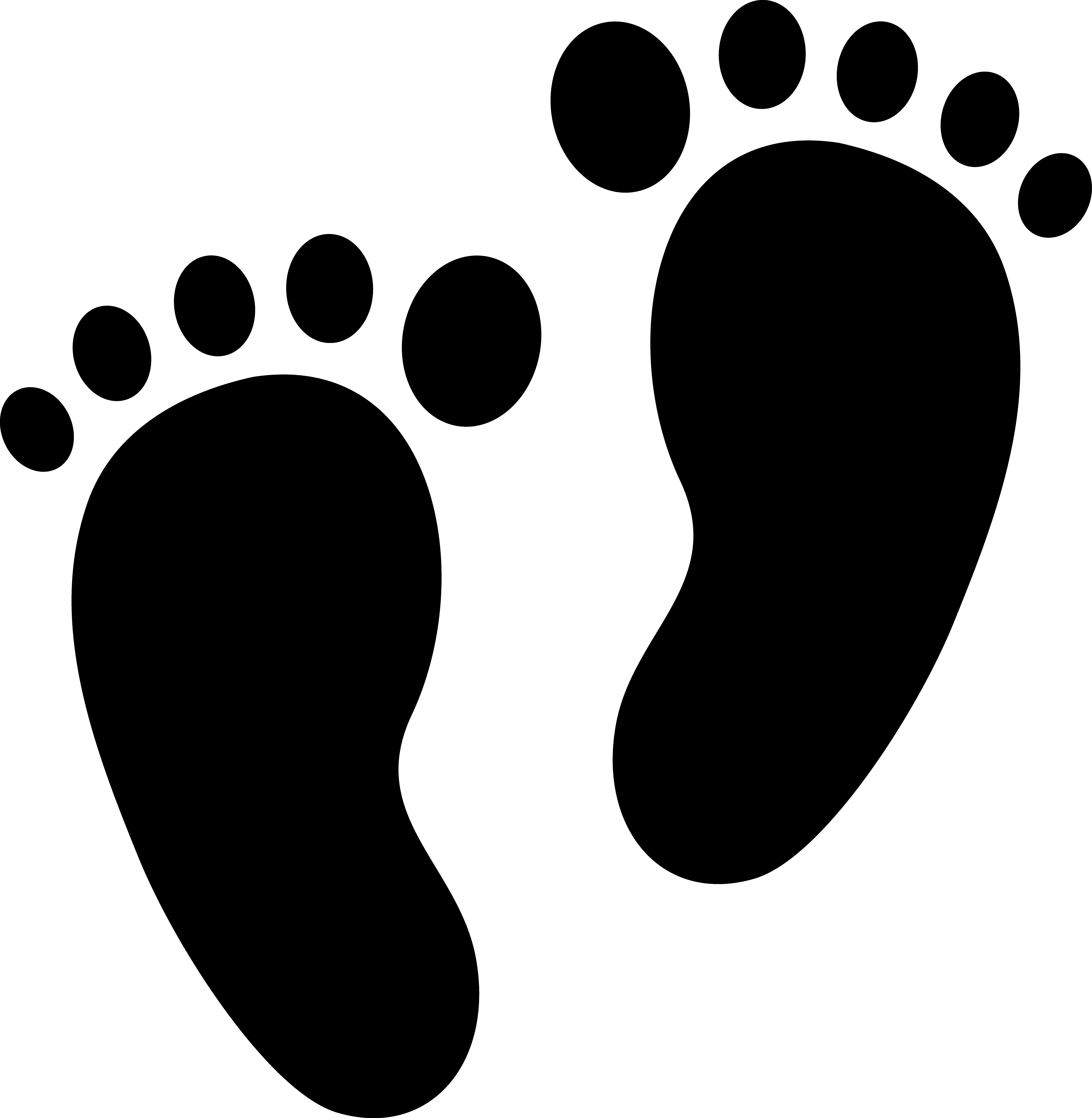
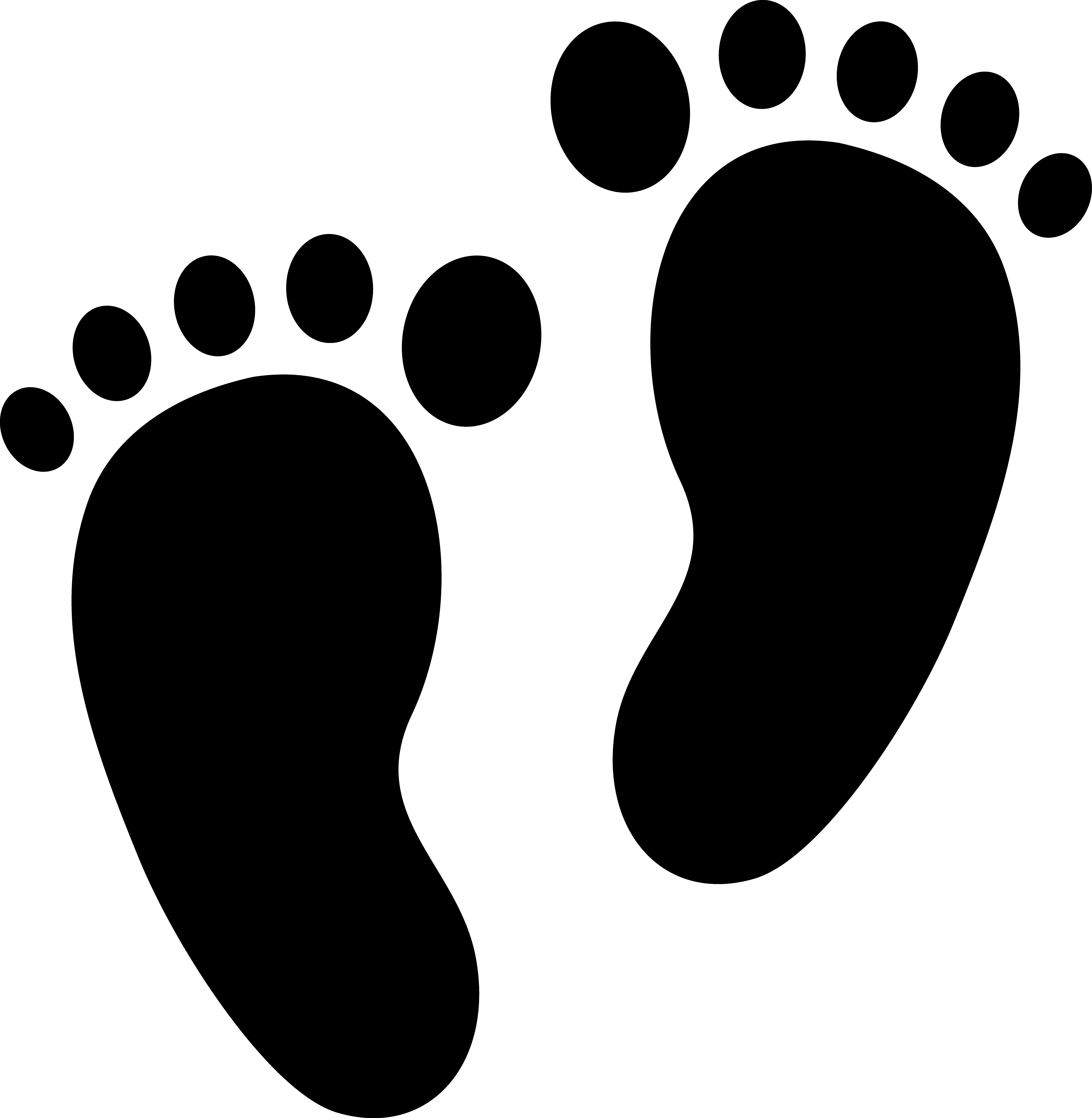
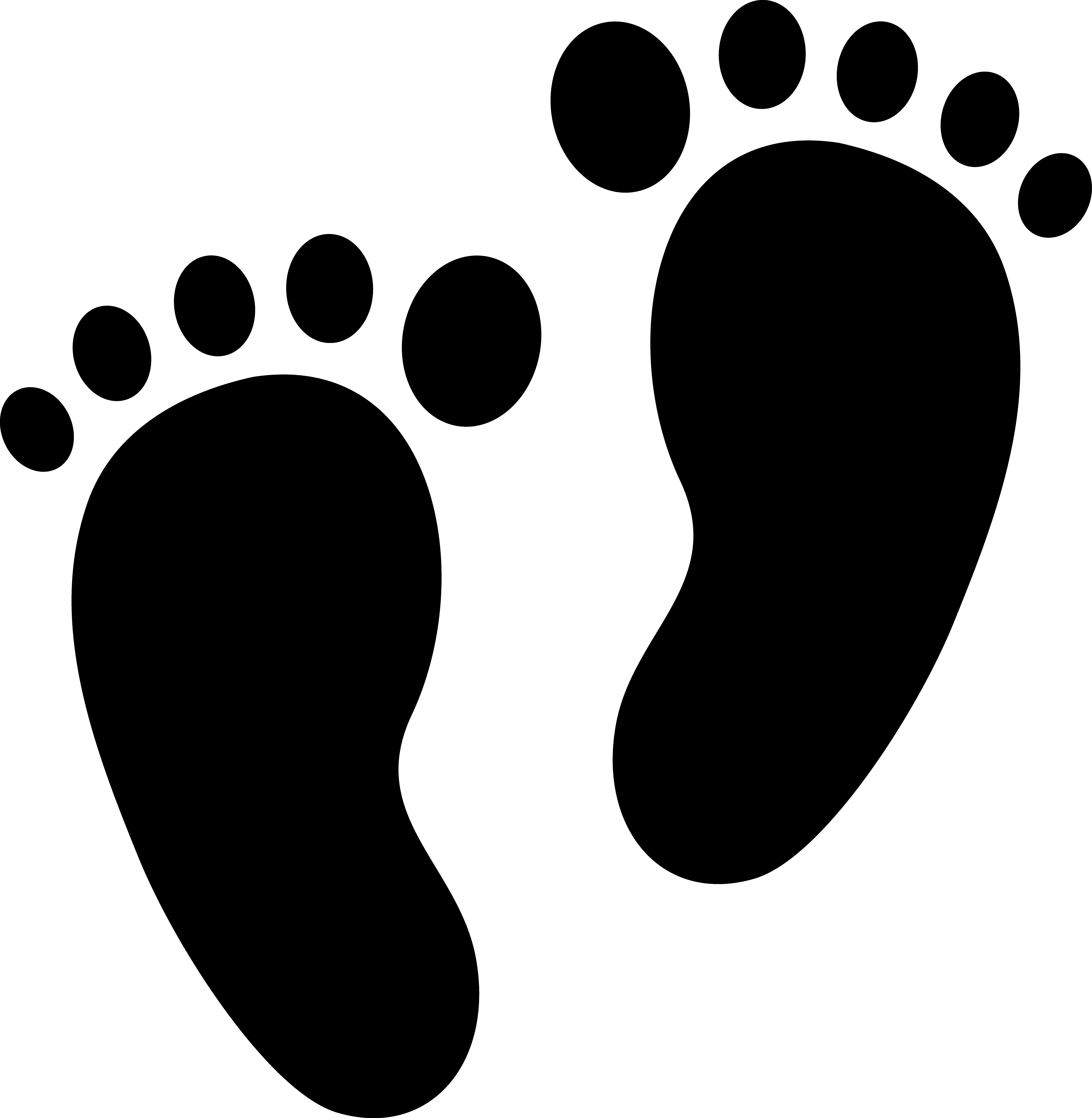
1. **For leg muscles\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
2. **For face muscles\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
3. **For stomach muscles\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

What is slow breathing?

Slow breathing balances your body. Slow breathing is not a magic charm for relaxation. It **helps to relieve stress and return to better functionality in difficult situations.** In order to breathe slowly, it is necessary to be sure to implement the following 3 principles: **regular inhaling, slow exhaling, and breathing at a steady and comfortable pace.**

Breathing should be effortless, without inhaling too deep. Don’t raise your shoulders or your chest when inhaling. Exhale slowly while filtering air through your teeth, sss,..while you do this your stomach pulls in. Relax your stomach muscles and let the air out. Bring air in without effort. The air will fill your stomach again. Now release it slowly, sss…focus on your breathing and continue to breathe in this fashion for a while. You can pretend that you are making the largest possible soap bubble.

Put one hand on your stomach while you breathe. Inhale gently without effort. If you do not raise your shoulders and your chest, you will feel how the air fills your stomach. Now let the air leave slowly through your teeth, sss. Feel how your stomach collapses. Notice the movements of your stomach while you continue to breath. Do this for 2-3 minutes. You can close your eyes if you like. Enjoy this new relaxed state.

**The 4-Step Model to Balance**

Interview your Parents:

\*Did you feel that slow breathing helped you to calm yourself and your body?

\*Did you have any particular problem? If so, what?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\* What situations do you think slow breathing can help you in?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

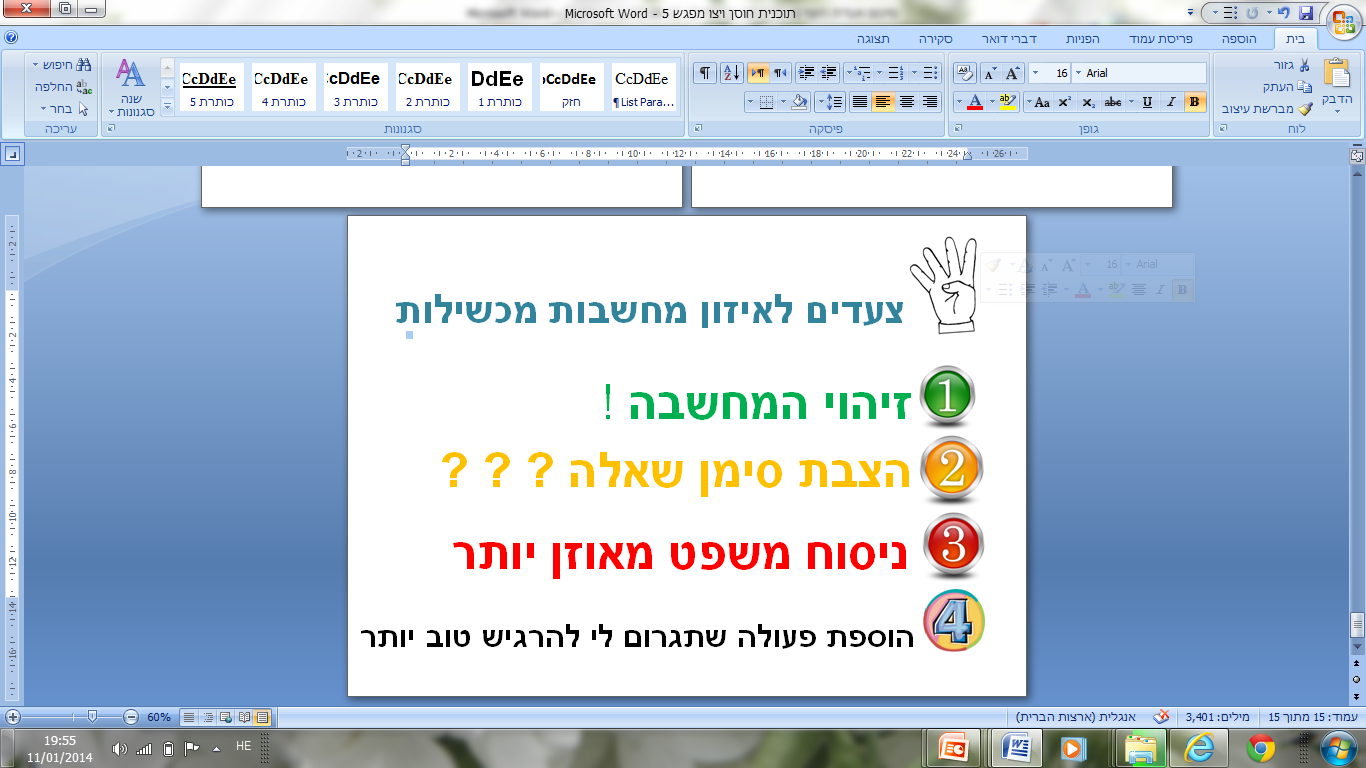
**When we are in a bad mood, this usually means that we’ve had a negative thought. During this time there can certainly be negativethoughts. It is recommended to “take care of” these thoughts with an easy and effective method –**

**the 4-step model.**

**Step 1- Identifying the negative thought in our head**

These thoughts usually appear like a new fact that jumps into our head without control.

**Step 2- Put a question mark** after the idea. Check if this thought is really true as a fact. Is it really always true?

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**Step 3- Rearrange the words in a new way and direct actions in a more appropriate manner** that relates to what you are feeling right now but is not reality at all (is not actually a real fact but a thought or feeling that seems correct at the time).

**Step 4- Think of what action you can take in order to feel better.**

For example – how this works:

1. **Identify the thought** – the situation will never end!
2. **Question mark-?** The situation will never end?
3. **Rearranging the words and directing the action** – Right now I am afraid that the situation will never end.
4. **Action that will help me feel better** – I will not let this feeling affect my mood. I know that I am protected now, and even though I am worried, I will be able to return to doing things that I enjoy like playing on the computer and watching television.

**Let’s Try Out the Model:**

**Now, once we have learned how to use this method, let’s try to use it with the thoughts we have been having lately.**

1. **Which negative thought are you thinking that is making you feel unhappy?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
2. **Formulate the thought with a question mark-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
3. **Formulate the thought as a current emotion and not as a fact**
4. **Add the action that you intend – what you can do in order to feel differently\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

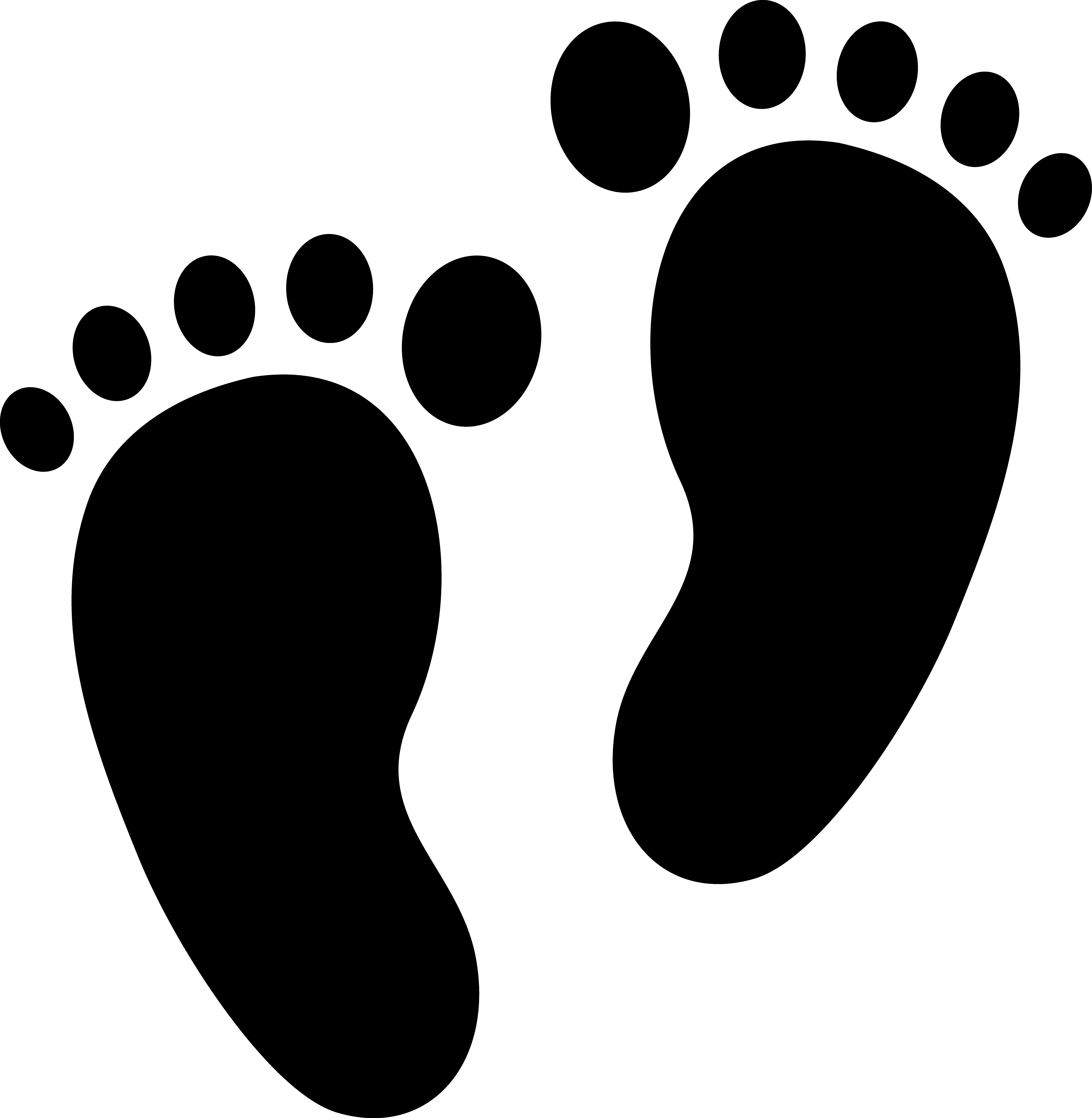
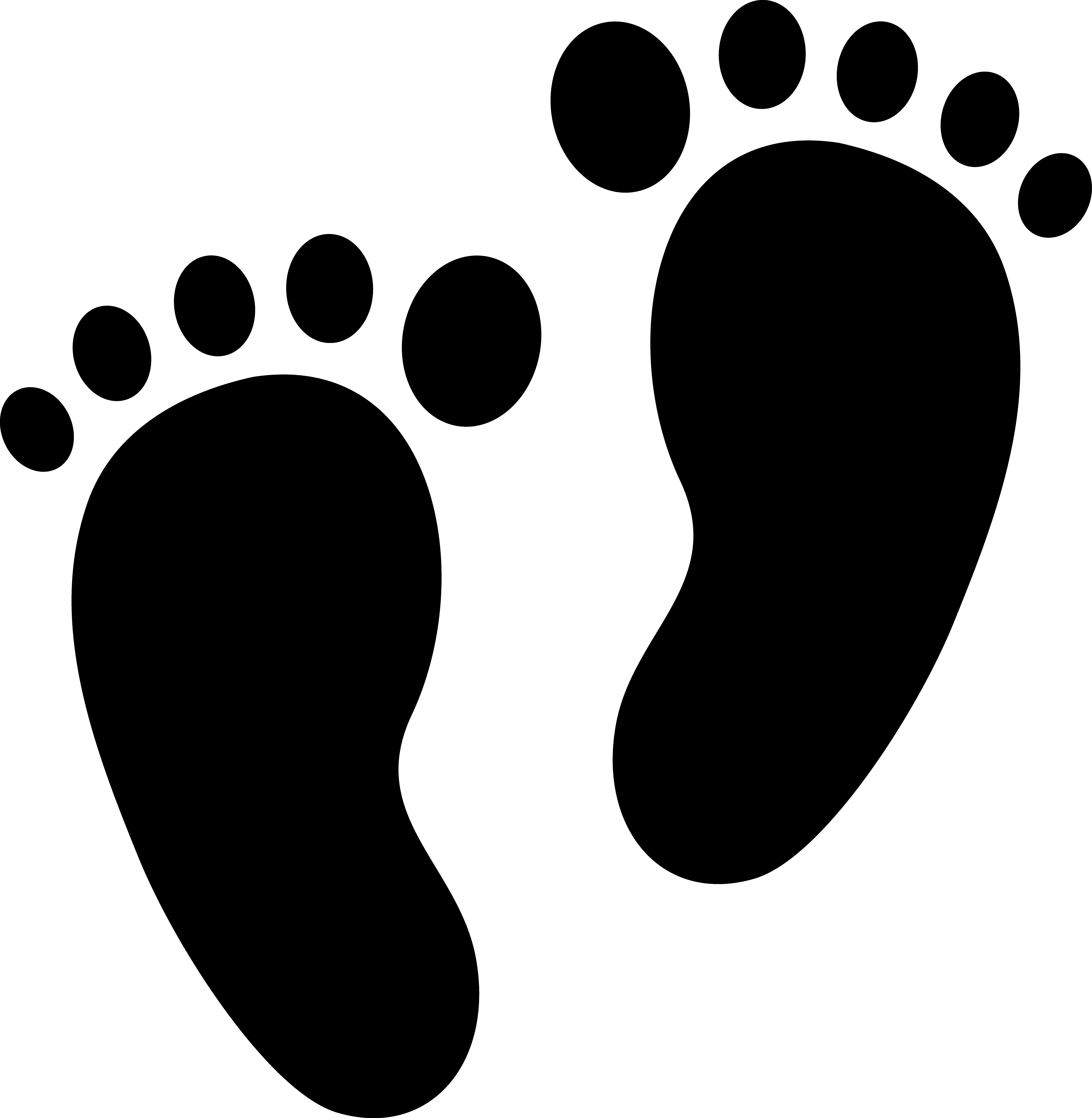
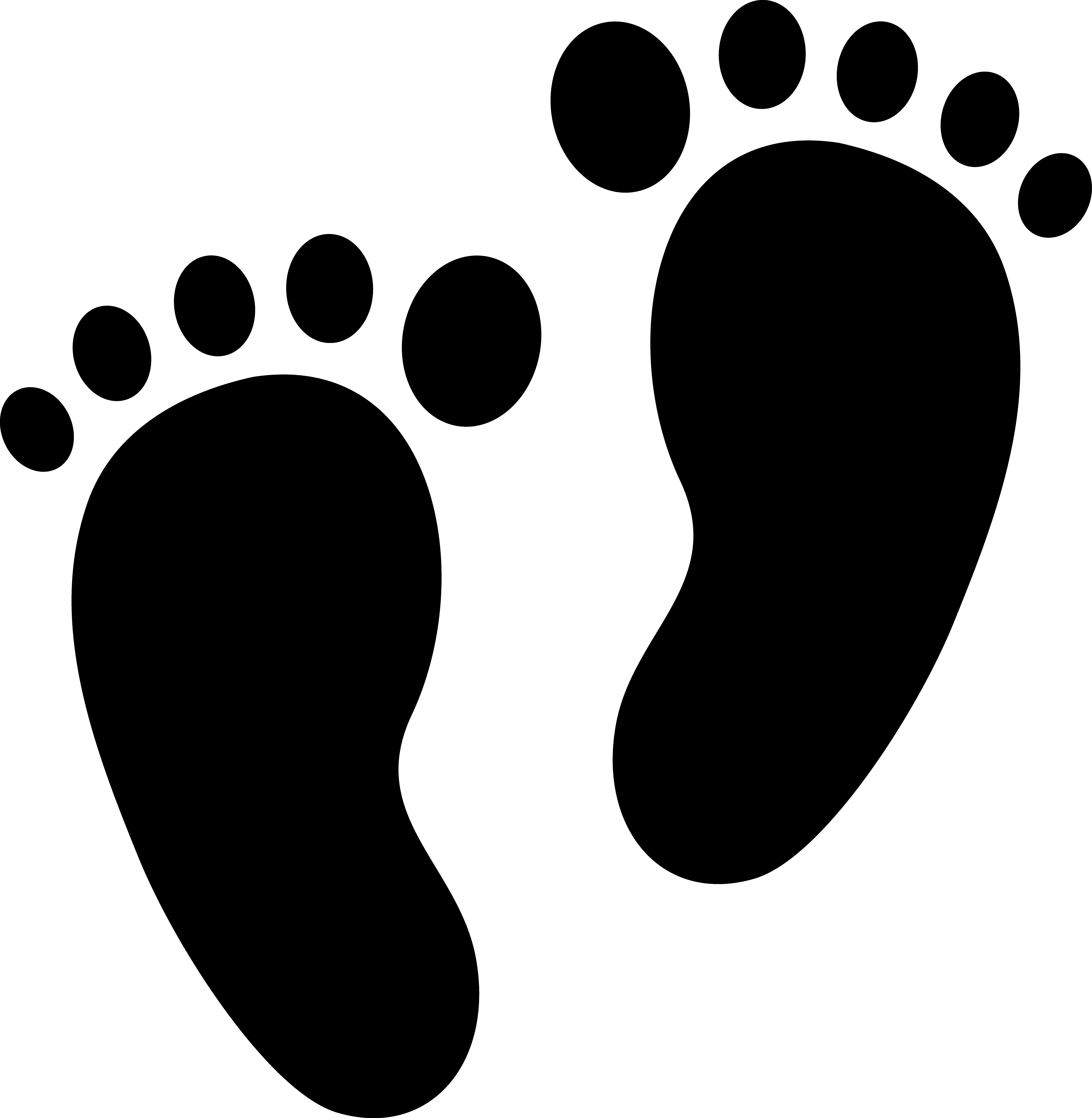
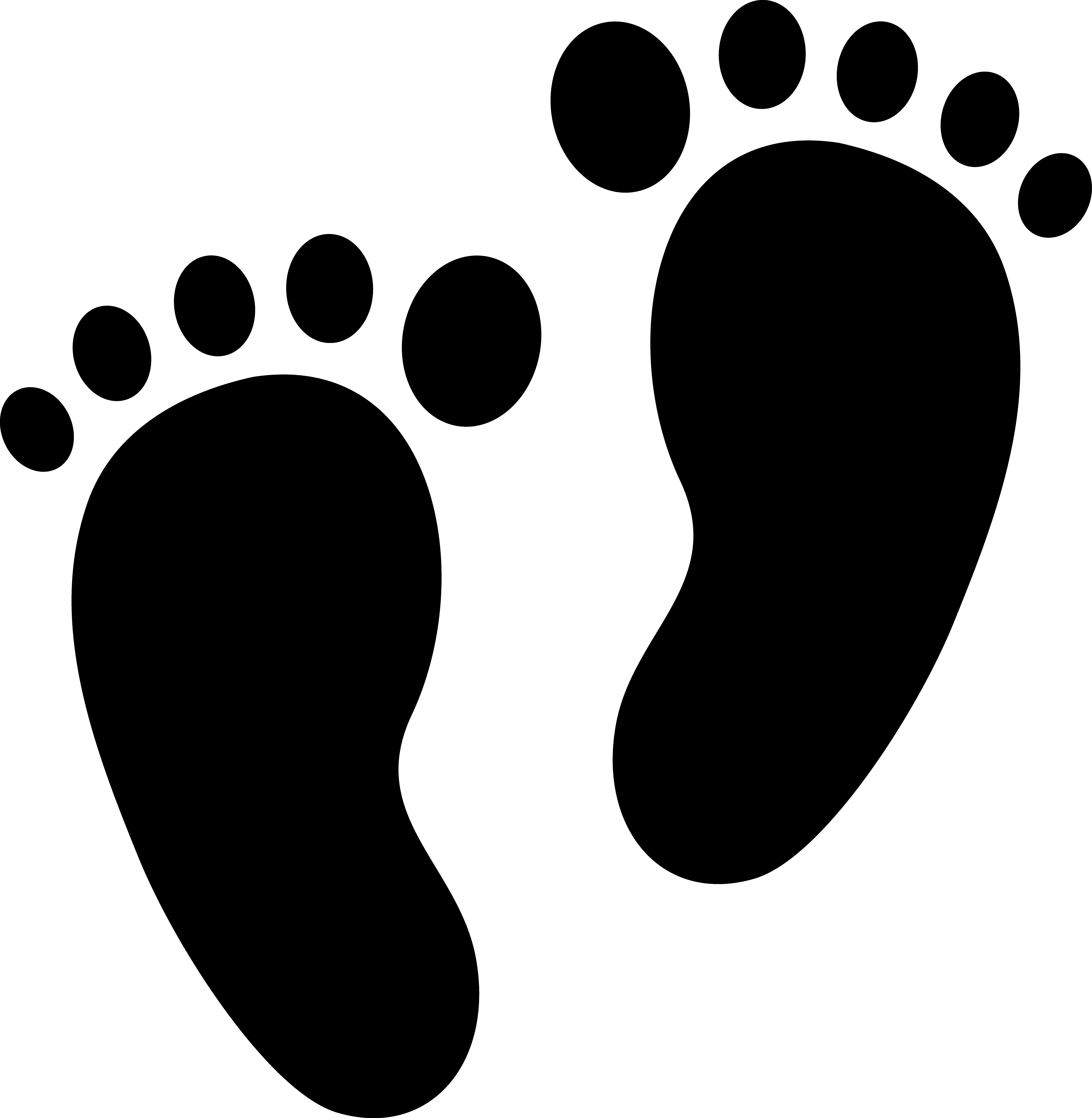
Remember, negative thoughts only reflect our feelings at the moment, and are not necessarily correct. It is important to re-formulate them in our head, not let them influence what we do, and motivate ourselves into action.

**During this time, when our everyday routine is disrupted by alarms and rockets, it is likely that we could feela great deal ofstrong emotions such as fear, anger, anxiety, or sadness.**

**In order to cope with all these emotions, it is necessary to halt, and only then can we act in a logical and correct fashion.**

**How is this possible?!?**

**We can operate according to the following stages.**

**.**





Stage one- Stop: take a break. Stop your current thoughts and give yourself a command: “Stop!”

Next, send the command to your body and muscles. Contract your fists while you take one deep, slow, breath, and then release the muscles in your fist while you exhale slowly. Ssss… (if this is appropriate to the situation, you can also put one hand on your stomach).

Now, take one deep breath, and then another slow breath or even two.

Next, use calming inner speech. I speak to myself and tell myself a key sentence such as “when I am in the protected space, I am secure,” or “I can cope with this.”

Now, I can motivate myself forward and cope better with the situation, or put it aside and try to deal with it later.

**Tell About a Time That You Needed to Use ThisMethod**

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**לכם**

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About the **Cohen-Harris “Hosen**” Center

The Cohen-Harris “Hosen” Center is a professional center that deals with initiating, creating, advising, training, research, and planning in the area of preparedness and development of resilience on personal, family, community, and organizational levels.

The Center’s programs are based on the principles of mutual and personal responsibility, and interpersonal unity.

The Hosen Center has experience in initiating, developing, and implementing programs on a national scale:

Between 2010 through 2013 a pilot “city resilience” program was operated in 18 municipalities (one million residents, a budget of approximately 20 million shekels) for developing and implementing a national model of preparedness and resilience in community systems in the areas of education, population, health/mental health, and information (for the Ministry of Internal Defense, with the cooperation of government ministries, national infrastructures, health funds, hospitals, etc.).

At the beginning of 2013, and scheduled for the next two years, a pilot program will be operated for the development and implementation of a model for resilience in places of employment, in the framework of the “Ma’agalim Fund,” for the benefit of professionals with high levels of burn-out. The Fund was established by the Industrialists Association, the Histadrut HaOvdim, and the Ministry of Economy, and its objective is to concentrate on professions with high levels of physical burn-out.

The Hosen Center provides numerous workshops at plants and institutions all over the country. Articles and research by the staff and associates, based on models constructed over the years, have appeared and been lauded in the world’s leading journals, and accepted as a recognized model in the field by the international professional and philanthropic community (such as the Van Leer Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation.)

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All donations to the Fund for At-Risk Children are recognized for tax purposes according to clause 46 of the Income Tax code.