

Mindful Parenting Family Tool Kit



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www.mindfulnesseveryday.org/mindfulparents.html



Mindful Parenting - Skill for being with the Ups and Downs of Life

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*Mindful Parenting provides Stress
Reduction & Life Strategies for parents, based on the principles of the MBSR
(Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) Workshop program created by Jon
Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical Centre in 1979.*

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WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Definitions of Mindfulness

*Mindfulness is the awareness that arises
from paying attention
in a particular way, on purpose,
to the present moment,
with non-judgment.*
Jon Kabat-Zinn



Mindful or Mind Full

*Mindfulness is
paying attention
to the here and now,
with kindness and curiosity.*
Amy Saltzman, M.D.

Mindfulness for Families

Mindfulness can be fun!

Here you will find inclusive ways to bring Mindfulness practice to your family life.

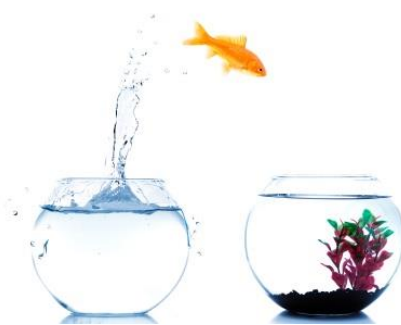
This is a tool kit if you will, of all ages Mindfulness practices.

Please adapt and make them your own, in a way that suits your family.

Bring Mindfulness to all of your life with your children. Remembering the key is to take your oxygen before embarking on anything. Simply pay attention to your breath and your body and add Mindfulness before reacting.

5 MINDFUL PARENTING SELF CARE TIPS

1. Be Present (Are you thinking about the past or worrying about the future? What is happening RIGHT HERE RIGHT NOW)
2. Practice Compassion (For yourself, children and others)
3. Beware of Thought (Thoughts are not always Facts)
4. Acknowledge what you are feeling - emotions (Name it to Tame it)
5. Be Aware of Breath (Vagus Nerve - Deep Breath relaxes the body)
6. Be Aware of Body (Body Scan: Befriend Gravity)
7. Accept Things as They Are (Respond vs React – it is what it is)
8. Be Mindful of Technology (Turn it off, all of it, sometimes)
9. Acknowledge Transitions - *Transitions are the spaces between moments. Transitions are not just about just getting you ready for the next experience, they **are** the experience.*



1. MINDFULNESS BOX



Create a little chest or box at home that your son or daughter can keep mindfulness reminders. It can be a safe space they go when they are feeling upset. A mindfulness chest can hold things like:

- Papers with instructions on Figure 8 and hand practices
- Stones or pebbles they have gathered to practice with
- A little bell they ring to remind them of listening
- A jar of sparkles and water
- Mindfulness Art work
- Mindfulness booklet

2. MINDFULNESS BELL



Find a place in your home to have a bell that is available for anyone to ring.

When it is rung, everyone in the home pauses for 3 breaths.

Stop whatever you are doing, and just feel the breath in your body.

Allow the body to relax and just feel the sensations in the present moment.

It takes a while to get everyone into the flow of the Mindful Bell, so be patient.

Just having the bell in the hallway or in a corner of a room can be a reminder for the family to be more mindful.

3. CALM DOWN JAR



This activity is sometimes referred to as "Mind in a Jar" because the water signifies our mind and the glitter our thoughts and feelings. When the water is calm it is clear, much like our mind is clear when our thoughts and feelings are calm. When something happens that causes our thoughts and feelings to swirl around, even just a little, we cannot see quite as clearly. And when the mind is very active, we can't see (through the bottle) at all. If we needed to make a decision or respond thoughtfully to someone, we would be very challenged to do so until we were able to calm our mind and see clearly.

It is important for children to understand that our thoughts and feelings are not bad, even when they are upsetting - they are a part of what makes us who we are. Mindfulness teaches us to grow in our awareness of our internal and external states; to be curious of our thoughts and feelings, and learn to sit with them even when they are uncomfortable.

CALM DOWN JAR MATERIALS

- Small jar: make sure it's one that will hold liquid tightly
- 2 tubes of glitter glue
- Half a tube of glitter
- A few drops of food color
- Water

This is pretty simple: just add everything to the jar. Use warm water and give it a good shake to get the glue mixed in well. Bring on the peace!

4. MINDFULNESS FEELINGS JAR



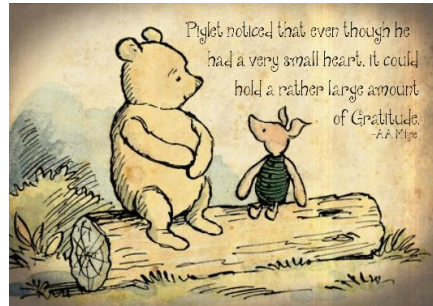
It's good to help children identify feelings in their body and build confidence in being with them. After we become familiar with the sensations in the body associated with emotions and learn to accept them, feelings aren't so scary. Having a jar with pieces of paper with feelings written in it gives us a chance to talk about feelings. You can sit down and look at the papers and talk about times you have felt that emotion. You can also have some fun and play charades with the papers with emotions written on them. Research has shown that helping children develop acceptance of their feelings is helpful in reducing anxiety.

5. FAMILY MINDFUL ART



Take some time to do art with your son or daughter. You can play some relaxing music while you do so, and feel the breath in your body as you close your eyes and draw lines together; breathing in draw one line, and on the outbreath draw in another direction. Colour them in and you can discuss what you find when you look at the art. Hang it on the wall as a beautiful reminder of your breathing.

6. GRATITUDE ACTIVITY



A nice easy activity you can do at meal time, before bed, or whenever you like. Research shows that practicing the 3 E's of Gratitude get results and help people improve wellbeing. Children can keep listing things and people they are grateful for. It doesn't have to just be one. Encourage them to *feel* how it feels to be grateful – where in the body do they feel it.

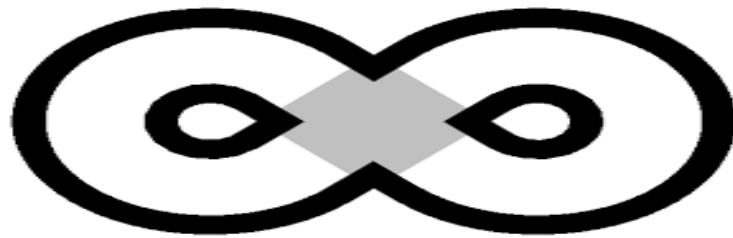
1. Exercise Gratitude: Do it **everyday**, just like physical exercise
2. Emote Gratitude: Mindfully feel the **emotions** (sensations associated with gratitude)
3. Express Gratitude: **Tell** it to people in your life, like your family

7. CLOUD DISSOLVING



This is a fantastic game to develop concentration with your kids. When you are outside with your child on a scattered cloudy day, find the smallest cloud in the sky, and decide to focus all of your concentration powers on that one cloud. Stare deeply at the cloud until it dissolves. Don't stop looking at it with your child until every last trace of the cloud has disappeared.

8. INFINITY SYMBOL BREATHING



Trace your finger along the inside of this infinity symbol. Starting with your finger in the centre, take a slow breath in as you move along one side of the symbol, and when you cross over to the other side, allow your breath to gently exhale. Follow this breathing pattern while you trace the symbol as many times as you like. (Mind Up Curriculum, 2014). You can also practice Infinity symbol breathing by holding your finger in front of you, and tracing an infinity symbol with your finger in the air.

9. COUNTING OCEAN BREATHS FOR SLEEP



Some people count sheep to help concentrate the mind, relax the body and fall asleep. Try counting your breaths to help fall asleep. Start at one, and each time you lose track, just start over at one again. Allow each breath to feel full like the ocean tide coming and going naturally.

10. BLOWING BUBBLES BREATHING



Have some fun and get out the bubbles. This is a great way to help younger kids (and adults) get in touch with the feeling of the outbreath. Breathe in deeply and feel your sensations as you breathe out fully while you blow bubbles.

11. BREATHING BUDDIES



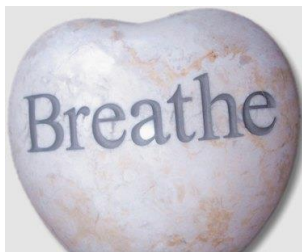
For young children, an instruction to simply “pay attention to the breath” can be hard to follow. A “breathing buddy” exercise can be more accessible: Each student grabs a stuffed animal, and then lies down on their back with their buddy on their belly. They focus their attention on the rise and fall of the stuffed animal as they breathe in and out.

12. FIVE FINGER BREATHING



Breathe in slowly and fully tracing up your finger, and out as you trace down the other side beginning with your thumb and continuing with each of your other fingers. As you follow the outline of your hand you will feel your body calming.




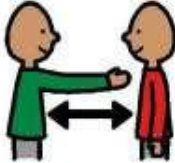


13. STONE BREATH



Collect some small to medium sized stones for practice with. Lie on your back and place the stone on your belly. Allow yourself to feel the stone rising and falling on

your belly, just like a little boat in the ocean gently rises and falls with the movement of the ocean.

14. MANAGING TEST ANXIETY

Managing Test Anxiety	Core Breathing Practice
<p>1. Sleep</p> 	<p>Let's begin by sitting down in a comfortable position and closing your eyes, if that is comfortable for you, or looking down at your hands.</p>
<p>2. Listen to Music</p> 	<p>Let's begin by paying attention to your breathing.</p> <p>Taking calm, slow breaths, gently breathing in through your nose, and then letting go of each breath.</p>
<p>3. Laughter</p> 	<p>Keeping your shoulders relaxed, picture the air coming into your body and going out again.</p>
<p>4. Talk to a Friend or Adult</p> 	<p>If your mind wanders, as it will, gently and kindly bring your attention back to noticing your breath.</p> <p>Feeling your belly rising and falling, keeping it soft and relaxed.</p>
<p>5. Practice a Relaxation Technique – Deep Belly Breathing</p> 	<p>When you are ready, opening your eyes slowly and taking another slow, deep breath with open eyes.</p> <p>Take a minute to notice how you feel now.</p>
<p>6. Exercise</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you notice about your breathing? • Did you notice if your attention wandered from the breath? • Were you able to bring it back to noticing your breathing?

15. MINDFUL EATING

mindful eating



Here are a few tips you can try at home:

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1 Always try to sit down at a table to eat.
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2 Before you sit, clear any clutter that may be on the table.
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3 Set a place for yourself, even if you are eating alone.
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4 Use tableware and utensils that appeal to you.
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5 Take a moment to adjust the lighting so it feels pleasant to you.
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6 Consider playing some soft, relaxing music while you eat.
- 

7 Try to minimize multitasking while eating.

16. SUGGESTED MINDFULNESS PARENTING ONLINE RESOURCES

Mindfulness Everyday	Downloadable lists of books, cd's and apps, articles, course information	http://www.mindfulnesseveryday.org/parents.html
Mindfulness Everyday YouTube Channel Mindful Families Playlist	Videos on Mindful Parenting	https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8EKmNvCC1cF3v9-IYSifoL1eZi4vYLKV
Mindful Families	A Toronto based resource for people interested in exploring mindfulness - for parents, children and families with mindfulness practices, songs, stories and resources (some for download)	www.mindfulfamilies.ca
Reaching IN Reaching OUT	Resiliency Resources for Parents	http://www.reachinginreachingout.com/resources-parents.htm
Kids Have Stress Too -	Free Parent Booklet and Handout downloads.	https://psychologyfoundation.org/Public/Resources/Parenting for Life Download Booklets/Public/Resources/Parenting for Life Download Resources.aspx?hkey=d409b94a-06e2-4d61-90c5-9a6383f17253
With Equal Step	Works with parent groups, educators and community agencies, building the capacity of parents to support their children's learning.	http://withequalstep.com
Mindfulness for Teens – Discovering Your Inner Strength	Provides information, tools, and resources for teens	http://mindfulnessforteens.com/
Stressed teens	Stressed Teens Course Offerings for Teens, Parents, and Professionals	https://www.stressedteens.com/
Anxiety BC Parenting Toolkit	practical strategies and tools to help you manage your child's anxiety.	https://www.anxietybc.com/parenting/parent-child
Stop Think Breathe App	With a little practice, you can create your own personal force field of calm and peace.	http://app.stopbreathethink.org/
Sounds True	A website that sells a wide variety of CDs and downloadable resources on mindfulness.	www.soundstrue.com