

PRACTICING MINDFULNESS WITH CHILDREN

Mindfulness is a powerful tool to help us slow down, pay attention and be fully present in the moment. Below is a list of fun and creative ways to teach your child mindfulness:

MAKE YOUR WALKS MINDFUL

Take a “noticing” walk with your child and try to notice things you haven’t paid attention to before. Use your 5 senses and identify what you see, hear, feel, and smell around you. Designate the first minute of your walk as “silent walking” and pay attention to all that is around you and then come together to discuss the things you noticed.



MINDFUL MANTRAS

Mantras are helpful when we need to calm ourselves down and bring ourselves back into the present moment. Create a list of phrases that you and your child can repeat silently as you take a deep breath. Here are some examples:

I am thankful.
Let it go.
I will be okay.
This too shall pass.
With change comes opportunity.

MINDFUL COLORING

Print out some coloring pages and practice coloring mindfully. Teach them to practice deep breathing as they color.

PRACTICE MINDFUL EATING

Eat a snack mindfully. Or, maybe just the first bite of a snack! For example, if the snack is an apple slice, have your child examine the apple as if they are an alien from outer space seeing an apple slice for the first time. What does it look like? What does it feel like? What does it smell like? Does light shine through it? Take a small bite but don’t swallow just yet. What is this bite like? Chew slowly. Take it all in. Talk about that bite afterward. What are new things they have discovered about the apple?

BRING MINDFUL AWARENESS OF ROUTINE ACTIVITIES

We can practice bringing our mindful attention to daily activities that are often performed mindlessly. Pick one of these activities to serve as your “Call to mindfulness” during the day: brushing teeth, taking a shower, drinking tea/coffee, eating a meal, getting out of bed, getting dressed, waiting in line, turning on your computer, opening a book to read, washing dishes, folding laundry, getting into bed.

PRACTICE MINDFUL MEDITATION

The loving-kindness meditation is a powerful meditation of sending positive thoughts and wishes to yourself and others. Close your eyes, imagine the person or pet you care about and say aloud or silently, “*May you be safe. May you be healthy and strong. May you be happy. May you be peaceful and at ease.*” These wishes can also be sent to yourself. Have your child pick four wishes they would like to send and practice saying these with them.

Recommended books:

A world of pausabilities: An exercise in mindfulness by Frank J. Sileo
Bee Calm: The buzz on yoga by Frank J. Sileo
Bee Calm: An invitation to meditation by Frank J. Sileo
Breathe by Ines Castel-Branco
Peaceful Piggy Meditation by Kerry Lee MacLean
Relaxations: Big tools for little warriors by Mamen Duch

Resources:

Calm app
Headspace app