

Teaching your Children Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a great way to help children build their autonomy and develop a sense of self. In addition mindfulness teaches compassion, kindness and acceptance. It has also been proven to improve attention, reduce stress and enhance self-regulation skills. Here are some ways that you can teach your children mindfulness and develop these practices as a family.

Brain Break- As a family take a brain break for 3-5 mins. Sit quietly close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Here is an example of breathing exercises you can do with your children:

Counting Breath

Inhale for 2 breaths, exhale for 2 breaths
Inhale for 2 breaths, exhale for 4 breaths
Inhale for 2 breaths, exhale for 6 breaths
Inhale for 2 breaths, exhale for 8 breaths
Do this practice for 1-2 mins and increase as it becomes easier.



Listening Walk- Take a walk somewhere and ask your children what sounds do they hear? What do these sounds remind them of? Ask them about a happy time or teach them to appreciate their walk as a happy experience.

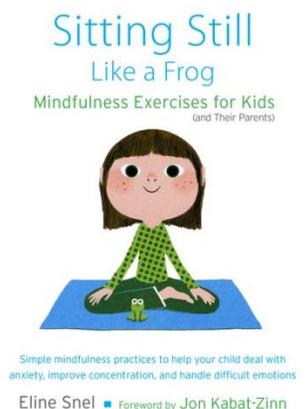
Mindful Eating – practice mindfulness while you are having a snack where everyone is quiet and focusing on what they are eating. Focus on your five senses while you are eating.

Practicing Gratitude – Start and end each day by saying what you are grateful for. This can be done any time for example during meal times, in a prayer, or on a car ride.

Sit Like a Frog

Mindfulness instructor [Eline Snel](#) offers several exercises for teaching meditation and mindfulness to children. One of the exercises is inviting a child to be like a frog. This exercise is adapted from the book [Sitting Still Like a Frog](#):

See if you can pretend to be a frog sitting very, very still on a lily pad. While you sit on that lily pad, Mr. Frog, you breathe. If you move too much, your lily pad will tip over, and you'll wind up in the water. So, you just sit still as your green frog tummy goes in and out. Although you can leap high into to the sky, you can also sit still like a statue, like you are now. Because you're a frog, you just watch what's happening all around you and within



you, and you don't jump into action right away. You simply sit still and breathe on that lily pad, storing up your energy. Notice how your tummy in and out, Mr. Frog. In and out.

“Stuffy Belly” Loving-Kindness Exercise

Start and end your day with a loving kindness meditation. It teaches your children to consider the well-being of everyone on the planet, including themselves.

While your children are lying in bed encourage them to pick out a favourite stuffed animal to place on their stomach. Ask them to watch the toy move up and down as they breathe.

After a few moments, ask them to say to their toy, “May you be happy, [insert toy’s name].” Instruct them to pretend there is a mirror in front of them, and invite them to say “May you be happy, [insert child’s name].” Now ask them to think of a friend and say, “May you be happy, [insert friend’s name].” Next, send positive thoughts to family members, neighbors, and others in your community. Expand that circle to include others in your country, everyone on the planet, and, finally, all beings. You can use phrases like, “May you live with joy,” “May you be content,” or “May you be peaceful.”



My Morning Affirmations

“Today is an incredible day! Success, Prosperity, and Abundance, in many different forms have naturally found their way into my life today. I gratefully enjoy their manifestations throughout my day and happily share these blessings of abundance with many others in order to bring happiness to their day as well.”

- “I Am Happy”
- “I Am Healthy”
- “I Am Wealthy”
- “I Am Secure”
- “I Am Worthy”
- “I Am Positive”
- “I Am Blessed”
- “I Am Grateful”
- “I Am Beautiful”
- “I Am Confident”
- “I Am Courageous”
- “I Am Excited About Today”