



## Activity Guide to Support Children’s Wellbeing

This guide provides a small selection of mindful activities for parents to use at home to support their child’s wellbeing. There are many different activities and resources, which we have included a few links for but please liaise with the class teacher if you require any further support or would like activities for a specific area. Please refer to ‘Parent’s Guide to Children’s Mental Health – Primary School’

(<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/mental-health-schools-make-it-count-parents-carers-guide.pdf>) for more information about Mental Health and Wellbeing.

### *What is Mindfulness?*

We explain to children that mindfulness means paying attention, with kindness and patience, to what’s going on inside as well as outside of you right now. The term “monkey mind” means feeling restless, agitated and distracted. A goal of mindfulness activities is to calm the constant chatter of the mind.

### *How do children become mindful?*

Children can become mindful by noticing their breathing, focusing their attention, expanding their awareness and by being patient even when things are hard. Help children build empathy, manage everyday emotions and have fun with mindfulness activities.

There are different reasons to require mindful activities. It may be because of high anxiety, feeling frustrated, overwhelmed or struggling to concentrate so the example activities are split into 4 main areas; **Start your day (stay grounded)**, **Find Calm**, **Focus (strengthen your mind)**, **Rest and Relax**.

### **Example activities:**

<p><u>Jungle Movement</u> Tighten and relax the muscles in your toes, ankles and legs. Lift one foot and feel your muscles working. Imagine you are an animal in a jungle. Being walking silently through the jungle without making a sound. Feel your toes helping you balance. Feel your weight in your heels. Move your arms in a slow sway. Cross the room 2 times paying attention to how you move.</p>	<p><u>Mindful Mood</u> Sit with your spine straight and body relaxed. Take 3 soft, slow breaths and notice your mood. Choose a marker or crayon to draw your mood. Blue could mean one mood. Red or green could mean another. Later you might be in a different mood so create a new drawing.</p>	<p><u>Rooted like a tree</u> Stand with your feet together and arms by your side. Image tree roots growing from the bottom of your feet down into the earth. Slowly lift one foot and press it against your other ankle. Clasp your hands together with just your pointer finger extended. Lift your clasp hands above your head. Balance, relax into the position and feel rooted like a tree. Lower your arms and try the other foot.</p>
<p><u>Shake out</u> Stand still like a statue, breath in and hold your breath. Breathe out and shake out your arms, shake them high and shake them low. On your next out breath shake out your legs. Then shake your body until it’s loose. Shake out the worries and see them fly off you like water drops. Finally flop down onto the floor and let out the last ‘ahhhhhh’. Take 3 breaths; fill your nose, lung, tummy.</p>	<p><u>Tummy Ride</u> Lie down and place a small soft toy on your tummy. Let your arms rest loosely by your side. Breathe normally and watch your toy rise up and down on your tummy pretending its riding and ocean wave. Count as you “breathe in – two three” “Breathe out – two – three” Does your breathing feel like a rolling wave?</p>	<p><u>Fist Squeeze</u> Take 3 mindful breaths and pay attention to what you are feeling. Imagine those thoughts and feelings are gathering like energy balls in your hands. Breathe in and squeeze your fists as tightly as you can. Breathe out slowly and open your hands, soft and loose. Imagine the energy balls flying away like sparks. Breathe in and squeeze your fists again, let the energy build. Breathe out and slowly opening your hands letting the energy go.</p>



<p><b><u>Mental Snapshot</u></b> Sit with a partner and have a small selection of objects in front of you. Take time to focus on each object. Close your eyes and your partner can take an object away. Can you remember what it is? Swap roles.</p>	<p><b><u>Open Ears</u></b> Sit with a partner, close your eyes and take mindful breaths. Your partner will ring a bell (or other object). Pay close attention to the sound. Notice how it fills the room. Raise your hand when the sound has gone. Put your hand down and focus your attention on all other sounds you can hear close by or far away.</p>	<p><b><u>Mind Castle</u></b> Sit mindfully (straight spine and body relaxed). Close your eyes and take three soft, slow breaths. Draw a castle in your mind. What does it look like on the outside? Does it have towers or a drawbridge? Now go inside, what do you see? Imagine wandering through the rooms and notice the shapes, smells and sounds of each room.</p>
<p><b><u>Safe Keeping</u></b> Write/draw a worry down on a piece of paper. Fold it up as small as you can and put it in a safe place such as a special box or drawer. You don't need your worry when you play, eat or sleep. You can throw your worry away when you don't need it anymore.</p>	<p><b><u>Mindful Colouring</u></b> Before you start colouring, take 3 deep breaths. You can find a detailed colouring page or you can create your own detailed drawing. Take your time to think about each section of your picture and tune out all your mind chatter.</p>	<p><b><u>Nature Walk.</u></b> Go on a mindful walk outside. While you are walking, take time to engage each sense and actively think about what you can hear, smell, feel, touch. Take time to tune into each sense. If you are not able to go outside choose a picture from a book or online (forest, sea, mountains) and imagine you are there. What can you feel? What can you see? Where are you? What can you smell?</p>

## **Yoga**

Yoga is great for wellbeing. Short sessions are great to refocus, calm or just be active. There are different child friendly videos for yoga, we recommend 'Cosmic Kids Yoga' (available on youtube or <https://cosmickids.com>) which tells a story through yoga stretches and engages children's minds as well as physically.

## **Stories**

Children re-reading familiar stories, looking through picture books independently or having stories read to them is another great way to feel calm.

Stories are also a great way for you, as parents/guardians, to address any emotion, which your child may be feeling. There are many books available to cover a range of different emotions at an age appropriate level. Here are a few suggestions of books we regularly use in school. For more information see the 'Books Trust' website or ask your class teacher who will be happy to recommend books for a specific concern:

- 'The Colour Monster' by Anna Llenas
- 'The Huge Bag of Worries' by Virginia Ironside
- 'Ruby's Worry' by Tom Percival
- 'Ravi's Roar' by Tom Percival
- 'The Worrysaurus' by Rachel Bright
- 'The Lion Inside' by Rachel Bright

## **Further Information and Activity Guides:**

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/parents-and-carers/coronavirus-wellbeing-activity-ideas-for-families/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/>

<https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zkyr47h>