

Mindfulness Activities

Mindfulness Activities (Great to practice for all ages, especially through stressful times like this)

☐ **Mindfulness Activities:**

Find a comfortable position, and use your best mindful posture. You will be in your mindful position for 5 minutes. Find a timer if you can, or just do this activity for as long as you can. During that time see if someone in your house will read your cloud relaxation script to you. Remember it is natural for your mind to wander. You won't be able to rid your mind of thoughts, if you find this happening, just let the thought pass through your mind slowly and return to your mindful activity. If the script is completed before the 5 minutes is up, use the rest of the time to focus on your breathing until the timer goes off. When you are in your position and comfortable, close your eyes and begin your mindfulness activity.

- ☐ I'm going to ask you to relax. In a few minutes, I am going to say some things that I hope will help you create a picture in your mind... I am also going to ask you to relax different parts of your body. Learning to relax will help you cope with angry, sad, and scary feelings. Find a comfortable position in your chair, not touching anyone, and take in a few relaxing breaths... Close your eyes and relax... Wiggle a little bit and make yourself comfortable... All right, take a few more relaxing breaths... breathe in...and breathe out...breathe in...and breathe out. That's it – you are feeling peaceful. Imagine a bright summer day. The sky is a beautiful shade of blue and the wind is lightly blowing. Now, with your eyes closed, pretend that you are on a white fluffy cloud, high in the sky on a beautiful day. You are floating peacefully on that white fluffy cloud... moving very slowly... you are as light as a feather... and the fluffy cloud holds you safely... floating across the sky. Now, as I count from 1 to 3, imagine that you are sinking deeper and deeper into that cloud...so the cloud is all around you. 1...2...3 – you are enjoying the ride on the cloud. Now, notice your toes and feet, how relaxed they feel... notice your legs...all the muscles in your legs are light and relaxed on the cloud... notice your arms...notice your neck...notice your head... now you are totally relaxed...floating on the fluffy cloud... Now, we are getting ready to stop our ride on the cloud. We will stop on the count of three...1...2...3 Open your eyes and stretch a little. Remember that you can return to your very own cloud whenever you feel like you need to calm down and relax.

- ❑ **1. Listen to the bell.** An easy way for children to practice mindfulness is to focus on paying attention to what they can hear. You can use a singing bowl, a bell, a set of chimes or a phone app that has sounds on it. Tell your children that you will make the sound, and they should listen carefully until they can no longer hear the sound (which is usually 30 seconds to a minute).

- ❑ **2. Practice with a breathing buddy.** For young children, an instruction to simply "pay attention to the breath" can be hard to follow. In [this Edutopia video](#), Daniel Goleman describes a 2nd-grade classroom that does a "breathing buddy" exercise: 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.

- ❑ **3. Make your walks mindful.** One of my children's favorite things to do in the summer is a "noticing walk." We stroll through our neighborhood and notice things we haven't seen before. We'll designate one minute of the walk where we are completely silent and simply pay attention to all the sounds we can hear -- frogs, woodpeckers, a lawnmower. We don't even call it "mindfulness," but that's what it is.

- ❑ **4. Establish a gratitude practice.** I believe gratitude is a fundamental component of mindfulness, teaching our children to appreciate the abundance in their lives, as opposed to focusing on all the toys and goodies that they crave. My family does this at dinner when we each share one thing we are thankful for. It is one of my favorite parts of the day.

- ❑ **5. Try the SpiderMan meditation!** This meditation teaches children to activate their "spidey-senses" and their ability to focus on all they can smell, taste, and hear in the present moment. Such a clever idea!

- ❑ **8. Practice mindful eating.** The exercise of mindfully eating a raisin or a piece of chocolate is a staple of mindfulness education, and is a great activity for kids. You can find a [script for a seven-minute mindful eating exercise for children here](#).

Above all, remember to have fun and keep it simple. You can provide your children with many opportunities to add helpful practices to their toolkit -- some of them will work for them and some won't.

But it's fun to experiment!