

INFANTS

Positive Behavior at **HOME**

The Family Activity book



To Mindfulness

Positive Behavior at HOME

Dear Parents,

Within this activity book, you will find various techniques that allow you to practice mindfulness with your child. They will allow you to be present in the moment and truly be aware of the bond between you and your child. The practice of mindfulness encourages you to acknowledge and accept your own feelings and thoughts while engaging with your child.

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is an evidence-based practice that helps us strengthen and build:

- Planning and organization
- Controlling impulses
- Managing and identifying emotions
- Developing a growth mindset
- Nurturing empathy

Throughout this book, you will find a practice activity to introduce you to mindfulness, several individual mindfulness activities focusing on different skills, and additional resources. We recommend doing one activity per day.

Here's what you will find inside:

Let's Practice

- **Goal: Practice being in the present moment.**
This activity allows you to practice with your child as you concentrate on your breaths. This is a great way to practice being present in the moment with your child.

Mindfulness Activities

- **Focus** - These practices allow you to slow down and focus on the present moment.
- **Kindness** - Mindfulness helps you to be kind regardless of what is happening around you. Awareness of your own feelings and the feelings of others nurtures empathy and allows you to care for others.
- **Grounding** - This is an important step in mindfulness practice because it allows you to stop and be aware of what is happening around you. When we are grounded in the present moment, we are better able to manage overwhelming feelings.
- **Letting Go** - Letting go techniques help you to disengage from things that make you feel overwhelmed. It allows you to handle things in a mindful, positive way!
- **Check-in** - Checking-in with your child is one of the most important things you can do. Taking time to slow down and let them know that you are there and care about them, helps promote feelings of safety and security.

Additional Resources

- **Boosting Mindfulness** - there are things throughout your household that you can use to boost mindfulness in children. This section will point out some of the everyday items to introduce to your child!
- **Books** - these books encourage children and adults to explore mindfulness and think of different ways to incorporate mindfulness into your daily routine.

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Let's Practice

1, 2, 3, Breath with Me!

Breathing exercises are a great way to help us stay in the present moment no matter what is happening around us. Children are hungry for our attention and affection and can sense when we are distracted. Taking time out of our day to connect through an activity like this is a great way to bring back those positive connections.

Instructions:

1. Start in a calming environment, you could even play calming music.
2. Hold your child close to your chest. Do whatever feels natural and comfortable for you both.
3. As you place one hand on your child's back, you are going to concentrate on breathing with your child. Keep in mind that your child's breaths will be faster than yours. You are not expected to keep up with your child's breaths but focus on yours.
4. You will breathe in for the count of 1, 2, 3, focusing on your breath; being mindful of your child in your arms, and slowly letting out your breath for a count of 1, 2, 3. You will repeat this as many times as you like.
5. Each time that you do this exercise you are both experiencing a calm state of mind and the purpose of the activity is to be mindful of each other.

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Mindfulness Activity that Strengthens Focus



Shining Star

Our children are the moon and stars. In this activity, you will practice finding the special little moments throughout the day where you can practice looking and appreciating one another. By practicing this activity, you will learn how to be mindful as well as spending more time focusing on each other.

Instructions:

This activity can be done at any time.

1. You and your child should be comfortable and relaxed. (Try laying on the floor next to each other, or holding your child in your arms in a chair.)
2. You will want to do your best to get your child's attention and try to make eye contact (Even the smallest attempt has its benefits.)
3. Once you have made eye contact, it is important that you immediately respond by communicating in 2 ways:
 - Verbal - Tell them something positive (i.e., you are amazing, beautiful etc.)
 - Non-Verbal - Show them a positive gesture (i.e., smile, giggle etc.)
4. See how long you both can focus on each other. Be intentional! Listen to what they are trying to communicate to you!
5. Show them that they are your shining star. This activity brings a moment of positive focus on each other.

***Try to complete this several times a day.**

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Mindfulness Activity that Nurtures Kindness



Loving Words

Children are remarkable and sensitive to our emotional cues. They learn kindness through the relationships that they have with the ones around them. As a parent, you play an important role modeling and instilling kindness and love. This activity will help you communicate kindness, gratitude and love through secret messages.

Instructions:

Children are observing you as well as sensing how you feel and act towards others.

Each time you interact with your child, silently repeat phrases that capture your gratitude and love that you have for them, such as:

- "I'm thankful that I can hold you"
- "I am thankful you're smiling right now" (Smile back)
- "Know that you are loved and safe"

Phrases can capture your gratitude and love. By adding nonverbal gestures, you are also modeling kindness and showing appreciation in more than one way.

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Mindfulness Activity that Supports Feeling Grounded



Grow like a Tree

Stretching is important for anyone and is a great way for you and your child to practice mindfulness together. In this activity, you and your child will practice stretching and pretending to grow like a loving tree.

Instructions:

1. In a standing position, hold your child close to your chest and take a deep breath.
2. As you breathe in, slowly raise your child up above your head as if you are a tree growing your branches up high.
3. With your child up in your arms above you, hold that position and look up at your child and smile taking deep breaths in. Hold that pose for the count of 3 and then slowly let your "branches down".
4. Slowly bring you and your child back down to the starting position.
5. You could go do this again and stretch from one side to the other.
6. You can do this as many times as you feel comfortable. You can also be creative and have your branches grow in different ways. Out to the side, down low, etc.

*Be mindful of your own positions.

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Mindfulness Activity that Leads to Letting GO



S.T.O.P

This is an activity that is for YOU when feeling frustrated or overwhelmed. This exercise will bring you back in touch with the present moment and allow you to stop and let go of strong emotions.

Instructions:

1. **S**top. Just take a moment and pause, no matter what you are doing.
2. **T**ake a breath. Feel your breath, this will help bring you back to the present moment.
3. **O**bserve. Acknowledge what is happening and accept what is happening. For Example: "I am feeling overwhelmed right now" Say it out loud!
4. **P**roceed. Take a brief moment to process that feeling. Close your eyes and experience that feeling, how is your body responding to that feeling? (i.e., breaths, thoughts, gestures, etc.)
5. Once you have practiced the steps of **S.T.O.P**, take a deep breath and ...LET IT GO!!!

*The key take away is identifying your feelings, accepting them, and letting them go.

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Mindfulness Activity that Supports Checking in on Emotions



You Are Loved

Some days, there is so much to do that we find ourselves missing moments to check-in with our children. Be intentional in planning times to stop and be attuned to the present moment. These connections help children feel safe, secure, and loved.

Instructions:

1. Pick a time during the day that you plan to check-in with your child and practice making it part of your routine.
2. During this time, stop everything you are doing and check-in on your child's needs. You can do this by talking to them, touching them, or holding them close.
3. Think about the things you see, smell, or feel. These things allow us to be present in the moment and really focus on what the child is trying to tell us.
4. Place your hand over their heart and pay attention to the way it beats.
5. These mindful moments encourage you to continue taking time out of your day to check-in with your child and be present in the moment.

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Additional Resources:

Boosting Mindfulness

While there are various activities that we can use to practice mindfulness, there are also everyday items that we can use as well! Toys and tools around your house can help boost mindfulness in children and promote the skills these activities teach. Some items that help boost mindfulness in children include:

- Sound machines
- Calming music
- Teething toys
- Pop up toys
- Colorful books

Books

Here's a sample of some of the most popular books on mindfulness. You can practice reading these books with your child and any age.

1. Ultimate Mindfulness Activity Book: 150 Playful Mindfulness Activities for you can practice with your child - Christian Bergstrom
2. Mindfulness for Kids: 30 Fun Activities to Stay Calm, Happy, and In Control - Carole P. Roman and J. Robin Albertson-Wren
3. Breathe Like a Bear: 30 Mindful Moments for Kids to Feel Calm and Focused Anytime, Anywhere - Kira Willey and Anni Betts
4. I Am Peace: A Book of Mindfulness - Susan Verde and Peter H. Reynolds
5. Sitting Still Like a Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids (and Their Parents) - Eline Snel and Jon Kabat-Zinn