

## Mindfulness for children ideas.

In the midst of this chaos and uncertainty, take time to step back, take a deep breath and practice some mindfulness as a family. Most of these ideas are aimed at pre-school and primary age children, but you're never too old for mindfulness, no matter what the form.

There are lots of great websites, books and resources out there with ideas. These are just some of the few that my little ones have enjoyed (my two boys or the students that I have taught).

- 5 sounds. Stop for 1 minute. Name at least 5 sounds that you can hear.
- Square breath. Draw a square (or use a post-it-note). First have your child trace their finger around the shape. Then start at the bottom left hand corner of the square, take an inhale and you move your finger upward (for approx the count of 3), then hold the breath (for 3) as you move your finger right, exhale (3) as you move your finger down and hold (3) as you move your finger left....back to the start. Repeat for several rounds. You can eventually elongate the breath count (adults may even want to start with 5 counts for each side of the square). This is a breath I practice daily. It's a great way to calm the nervous system.
- High five/star breath. Like above, you are moving breath with motion. Trace the hand SLOWLY. Everytime you move your finger (that is tracing) upward, breathe in. On the way down, exhale. Can also be done by tracing a star.
- "Teddy bear ride" - Place a favourite toy on your belly. Using only big breaths (where the air fills your lungs and tummy) make your toy move slowly up and down.
- Imaginary ball breath. Start with hands close together, as if they were holding a small ball. As you slowly inhale, move the hands apart. As you exhale move the hands back together.
- Blow bubbles. Fun and a great way to practice a smooth steady out breath. You may even ask your child to describe the bubbles.
- Super sound/super listening. I use a singing bowl but it can be done with a ding on a glass, a bell or anything that has a bit of a lingering sound. Ask child/children to close their eyes. "Ding" your sound. Ask your child to open their eyes once they can NO LONGER hear the sound. I suppose you could even do this by slowly lowering the volume of music.
- Super vision. (Like I spy) Find a small agreed upon object (I often use a marble or brightly coloured feather). Place it somewhere in the room (not in anything or hidden behind anything). Child remains seated and tries to find the object. \*Make sure it is in their line of sight.
- You can also guide your child through a short visualization or meditation. It sounds scary, I know, but it could be as simple as- notice what your breath feels like (moving in and out of nostrils, moving chest up and down, etc). I also really enjoy a heart focused guided visualization. (Imagine a flame/fire/xxxxx colour in the center of your heart. With each inhale the flame/colour brightens. With each exhale the colour slowly starts to spread. First across your chest....then to your belly....etc). Create a world for them to explore in their mind. (Imagine you are on a boat, on the moon, you're a butterfly, etc)

- Finally, never underestimate just talking. What do you see? What do you notice? How do you feel?

Remember, we are the filters that our children see the world through.

Stay well,  
Jillian McLean