

April 27, 2020

# HCS Social Emotional Newsletter- Developing a Mindfulness Practice

## WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Hi Highland Students & Families,

This week, we are focusing on mindfulness and we will learn about and practice different mindful activities such as mindful breathing, meditation, and yoga. There are a variety of ways to define mindfulness, but we will use the following,

*"The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experiences moment by moment"*  
- John Kabat-Zinn

In a nutshell, mindfulness means paying full attention, slowing down and really noticing yourself and your environment. Mindfulness practice can increase positivity, self-esteem, and one's ability to focus and self-regulate. Keep reading to learn how to integrate mindfulness into your daily life. Hope you enjoy!

Ms. Alexis, School Social Worker



Are you having difficulty meeting basic needs at this time?

Please reach out to me directly at [akramschuster@hcsmlake.org](mailto:akramschuster@hcsmlake.org) or at 414-376-0655 for local resources and assistance.

## HOW CAN WE TEACH OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN TO BE MORE MINDFUL?

If you and/or your family has never practiced mindfulness, don't worry. Below are some ideas for how to teach mindfulness and incorporate it into daily life at home -

### Settle Your Mind with "Brain Breaks"

These breaks can be taken while completing homework, during stressful situations, or when emotions are high. During a brain break, you stop what you're doing, take a deep breath, and calm yourself for a few minutes. During this break, focus on quieting your mind and being present.

### Go on "Listening Walks"

To reinforce the idea of being present in the moment, take your kids for a walk and ask them what sounds they hear, what the sounds remind them of, and if they were reminded of any happy experiences or memories.

### Engage with Food

Being mindful with food is a very easy way to integrate mindfulness into your daily life, without disrupting your schedule or setting special time aside. When eating a meal or snack, tell your child to focus on their food and be aware of each bite and what it tastes like.

### Use an App like Stop, Breathe, & Think

There are many apps that feature mindful games and activities for kids to help with focus, regulation, and quiet time. Some of the apps even have challenges and missions for kids to complete. See more suggestions on the next page.

## Mindfulness Videos & Apps

Mindfulness has become extremely popular and there are countless videos, phone apps, and products focusing on mindfulness techniques for both adults and children. Below I will share with you some of my favorite mindfulness videos and apps that are out there!

[Peace Out Guided Relaxation for Kids](#) by Cosmic Kids Yoga

[Melting Body Exercise](#) from GoNoodle FLOW

[Shake It Off](#) from GoNoodle Think About It

All of these apps have short, developmentally appropriate mindfulness exercises for kids. Each contains the link if you are interested in checking them out!

[Stop, Breathe, & Think Kids](#) - they have an app for adults too!

[Super Stretch Yoga](#) - contains more physical, active practices to get your body moving.

[Ninja Focus](#) - contains meditations, bedtime stories, and music - FREE for the next 90 days!

## Book Recommendations: Mindfulness Practice

Here are some great books about mindfulness:

[Breathe Like A Bear](#) by Kira Willey  
-This book consists of 30 mindfulness activities focusing on being calm, gaining focus, using your imagination, making energy, and relaxing.  
-The Flower Breath meditation is featured in the video.

[Puppy Mind](#) by Andrew Jordan Nance  
-A book about how to train your wandering mind.  
-Where does your mind take you when it wanders?  
-How can you train your mind to stay in the present? (i.e. removing distractions, taking deep breaths)

[What Does It Mean to Be Present?](#) by Rana DiOrio  
-This book helps to explain how we can be more present instead of focusing on what happened in the past or what might happen in the future.

## How to Make a Calm Corner/Peace Corner at Home

### What is it?

A calm down corner is a safe place to identify your feelings, calm down, and learn some coping skills to use the next time you are upset. The calm corner is a restorative space, **not** a punitive space.

### Where should it be?

The space can be within a child's room or in a common room of the home - whatever works!

### What should be in the corner?

Familiar items will be more comforting, so you don't need to buy anything! Be sure to include some pillows, blankets, or soft stuffed animals for younger children. You may also want to have some books, quiet toys or fidgets, a mindful jar (see DIY instructions below), and some visuals featuring emotions, coping skills, breathing exercises, and/or movement activities. These visuals can be drawn! 😊

## Featured Family Activity: Mindfulness Calm Jar



To make a mindfulness calm jar, you will need:

- A clear jar with a tight-fitting lid
- Clear glue or glitter glue
- Dry glitter
- Water

1. Fill the jar almost all of the way with water, then add some of the glue and the dry glitter.
2. The more glue you add, the longer it will take for the water to settle.
3. Make sure the lid is on tight. You can even glue the lid shut.