

Mindfulness Everyday

# Mindful Parenting

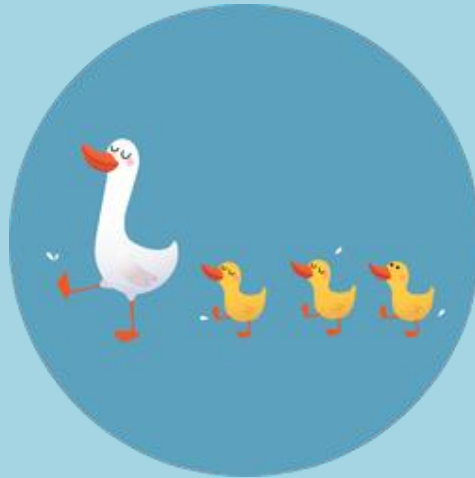
Family Tool Kit



For more information, please visit  
[MindfulnessEveryday.org/mindfulparenting.html](http://MindfulnessEveryday.org/mindfulparenting.html)



# WHAT IS IMPRINTING?



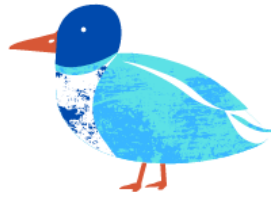
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## **An Interesting Fact:**

When born, animals such as ducks' bond to the animal or object it meets at birth; this is called imprinting, a phenomenon that has an intense effect on the animal's overall development and mental state. Like in ducks, imprinting can occur with humans shortly after birth or within the few months of life—most commonly with a parent.

Jon Jaehnig

## Mindfulness for Families



*Mindful Parenting - Skill for being with the Ups and Downs of Life Curriculum Authors*

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*Mindful Parenting provides  
Stress Reduction & Life Strategies for parents, based on the principles of the MBSR  
(Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) Workshop program created by Jon Kabat-Zinn  
at the University of Massachusetts Medical Centre in 1979.*

*Mindfulness Everyday is a registered Canadian charity #83693 3507 RR0001.*

# MINDFUL FAMILY TOOL KIT

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# WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

## Definitions of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the awareness that arises from paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, to the present moment, with non-judgment.

Jon Kabat-Zinn

## Mind Full or Mindful?



**Mindfulness is paying attention to the here and now,  
with kindness and curiosity.**

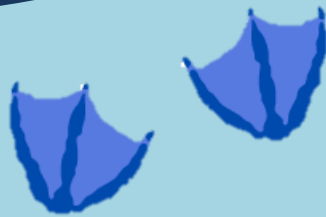
**Amy Saltzman, M.D.**

# MINDFULNESS FOR FAMILIES

Mindfulness can be fun!

Here you will find inclusive ways to bring Mindfulness practice to your family life. This is a tool kit if you will, of all ages Mindfulness practices. Please adapt and make them your own, in a way that suits your family.

Bring Mindfulness to all of your life with your children. Remembering the key is to take your oxygen before embarking on anything. Simply pay attention to your breath and your body and add Mindfulness before reacting.



## MINDFUL PARENTING TIPS

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1. Be Present (Are you thinking about the past or worrying about the future? What is happening RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW)
2. Practice Compassion (For yourself, children and others)
3. Beware of Thought (Thoughts are not always Facts)
4. Acknowledge what you are feeling - emotions (Name It to Tame It)
5. Be Aware of Breath (Vagus Nerve – Deep Breath relaxes the body)
6. Be Aware of Body (Body Scan: Befriend Gravity)
7. Accept Things as They Are (Respond vs. React – it is what it is)
8. Be Mindful of Technology (Turn it off, all of it, sometimes)
9. Acknowledge Transitions – *Transitions are the spaces between moments. Transitions are not just about getting you ready for the next experience; they are the experience.*

### 1. MINDFULNESS BOX

Create a little chest or box at home that your son or daughter can keep mindfulness reminders. It can be a safe space they go when they are feeling upset. A mindfulness chest can hold things like:

- Papers with instructions on Figure 8 and hand practices
- Stones or pebbles they have gathered to practice with
- A little bell they ring to remind them of listening
- A jar of sparkles and water
- Mindfulness Art work
- Mindfulness booklet

### 2. MINDFULNESS BELL

Find a place in your home to have a bell that is available for anyone to ring. When it is rung, everyone in the home pauses for 3 breaths. Stop whatever you are doing, and just feel the sensations in the present moment. It takes a while to get everyone into the flow of the Mindful Bell, so be patient. Just having the bell in the hallway or a corner of a room can be a reminder for the family to be more mindful.

### 3. FAMILY MINDFUL ART

Take some time to do art with your son or daughter. You can play some relaxing music while you do so, and feel the breath in your body as you close your eyes and draw lines together; breathing in draw one line, and on the outbreath, draw in another direction. Colour them in and you can discuss what you find when you look at the art. Hang it on the wall as a beautiful reminder of your breathing.

## 4. GRATITUDE ACTIVITY

A nice easy activity you can do at meal time, before bed, or whenever you like. Research shows that practicing the 3 E's of Gratitude get results and help people improve wellbeing. Children can keep listing things and people they are grateful for. It doesn't have to be just one. Encourage them to *feel* how it feels to be grateful – where in the body do they feel it.

1. Exercise Gratitude: Do it **everyday**, just like physical exercise
2. Emote Gratitude: Mindfully feel the **emotions** (sensations associated with gratitude)
3. Express Gratitude: **Tell** it to people in your life, like your family

## 5. BLOWING BUBBLES BREATHING

Have some fun and get out the bubbles. This is a great way to help younger kids (and adults) get in touch with the feeling of the outbreath. Breathe in deeply and feel your sensations as you breathe out fully while you blow bubbles.

## 6. INFINITY SYMBOL BREATHING

Trace your finger along the inside of this infinity symbol. Starting with your finger in the centre, take a slow breath in as you move along one side of the symbol, and when you cross over to the other side, allow your breath to gently exhale. Follow this breathing pattern while you trace the symbol as many times as you like (Mind Up Curriculum, 2014). You can also practice infinity symbol breathing by holding your finger in front of you, and tracing an infinity symbol with your finger in the air.





## 7. COUNTING OCEAN BREATHS FOR SLEEP

Some people count sheep to help concentrate the mind, relax the body and fall asleep. Try counting your breaths to help you fall asleep. Start at one, and each time you lose track, just start over at one again. Allow each breath to feel full like the ocean tide coming and going naturally.

## 8. BREATHING BUDDIES

For young children, and instruction to simply “pay attention to the breath” can be hard to follow. A “breathing buddy” exercise can be more accessible: 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.

## 9. FIVE FINGERS BREATHING

Breathe in slowly and fully tracing up your finger, and out as you trace down the other side beginning with your thumb and continuing with each of your other fingers. As you follow the outline of your hand you will feel your body calming.


## 10. STONE BREATH

Collect some small to medium sized stones for practice with. Lie on your back and place the stone on your belly. Allow yourself to feel the stone rising and falling on your belly, just like a little boat in the ocean gently rises and falls with the movement of the ocean.

# 11. MINDFUL EATING

## mindful eating

Here are a few tips you can try at home:





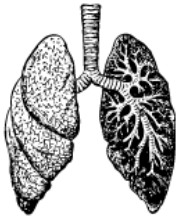

-  1 Always try to sit down at a table to eat.
-  2 Before you sit, clear any clutter that may be on the table.
-  3 Set a place for yourself, even if you are eating alone.
-  4 Use tableware and utensils that appeal to you.
-  5 Take a moment to adjust the lighting so it feels pleasant to you.
-  6 Consider playing some soft, relaxing music while you eat.
-  7 Try to minimize multitasking while eating.

## 12. MINDFUL WALKING ACTIVITY

Walking meditation is a grounding and steadying mindfulness activity that gives your child access to something that she can do anytime and anyplace when she needs to tune in to her own body and mind. It is a simple but supportive practice. The repetitive movement is soothing, and for many children the movement helps to quiet their minds. This is best done without shoes on.

- Standing like a mountain, tall and strong, with your feet hip-width apart, grounded, with your feet making contact with the earth and your head elevated to the sky.
- Beginning the practice by taking 3 long, slow breaths.
- Noticing how your feet feel making contact with the ground. Moving your weight around a little to see how it feels. Leaning forward and backward, then from side to side. Then finding your center—the place where you are balanced and most strong.
- Beginning to take a slow walk, between 5-10 steps – you do not need a lot of room to do this. Just walking a short path in any room and then turning around and walking back to where you started. Or, you can do this outside in a safe place (grass is wonderful).
- Not looking at your feet, just feeling your feet as they make contact with the surface you are walking on. Your feet know what to do.
- Noticing how your feet feel as you walk. What is the sensation like in your heels? In your toes?
- After a few moments, start to notice what walking feels like in the rest of your body. What happens in your legs and hips when you walk? What about your arms? Can you feel walking in your neck and your face?
- You can experiment with the pace, trying slow walking to medium pace.
- If your mind starts to wander while you are taking your walk, that's no problem. Just noticing where it is wandering to and then gently bringing it back to how your body is feeling during your walk.
- When you are ready to finish your mindful walk, come back into mountain position just like you started. Taking a long slow breath and perhaps sending some gratitude to your feet and legs for supporting you.

# 13. MANAGING TEST ANXIETY

Managing Test Anxiety		Core Breathing Practice
1. Sleep		<p>Let's begin by sitting down in a comfortable position and closing your eyes, if that is comfortable for you, or looking down at your hands. Let's begin by paying attention to your breathing. Taking calm, slow breaths, gently breathing in through your nose, and then letting go of each breath. Keeping your shoulders relaxed, picture the air coming into your body and going out again. If your mind wanders, as it will, gently and kindly bring your attention back to noticing your breath. Feeling your belly rising and falling, keeping it soft and relaxed. When you are ready, opening your eyes slowly and taking another slow, deep breath with open eyes. Take a minute to notice how you feel now.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you notice about your breathing?</li> <li>• Did you notice if your attention wandered from the breath?</li> <li>• Were you able to bring it back to noticing your breathing?</li> </ul>
2. Listen to Music		
3. Laughter		
4. Talk to a Friend or Adult		
5. Practice a Relaxation Technique – Deep Belly Breathing		
6. Exercise		

# 14. SUGGESTED MINDFULNESS PARENTING ONLINE RESOURCES

<b>Mindfulness Everyday</b>	Resources for children and their parents	<a href="#">Mindfulness Everyday</a>
<b>Mindfulness Everyday YouTube Channel Mindful Families Playlist</b>	Videos on Mindful Parenting	<a href="#">Mindful Families - YouTube</a>
<b>Mindful Families</b>	A Toronto based resource for people interested in exploring mindfulness - for parents, children and families with mindfulness practices, songs, stories and resources (some for download)	<a href="#">Home (mindfulfamilies.ca)</a>
<b>Kids Have Stress Too</b>	Free Parent Booklet and Handout downloads.	<a href="#">Kids Have Stress Too! (psychologyfoundation.org)</a>
<b>With Equal Step</b>	Works with parent groups, educators and community agencies, building the capacity of parents to support their children's learning.	<a href="#">About   With Equal Step</a>
<b>Mindfulness for Teens – Discovering Your Inner Strength</b>	Provides information, tools, and resources for teens.	<a href="#">Mindfulness for Teens</a>
<b>Stressed Teens</b>	Stressed Teens teaches mindfulness skills and provides tools for those in their pre-teen years through latter adolescence and even for young adults. Provides Resources, Books, Courses, for Teens, Parents, and Professionals.	<a href="#">Stressed Teens</a>
<b>Bounceback Ontario</b>	BounceBack is an online self-help program, designed back CMHA (Canadian Mental Health Association). The program provides telephone coaching, skill-teaching videos, and workbooks that teach individuals 15+ practical strategies to improve their mental health.	<a href="https://bouncebackontario.ca/">https://bouncebackontario.ca/</a>
<b>Smiling Mind App</b>	Smiling Mind is a free app developed by psychologists and educators to help bring balance to your life.	<a href="https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app">https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app</a>
<b>MindShift CBT App - Anxiety Relief</b>	MindShift CBT is a free self-help anxiety relief app, that helps you reduce worry, stress, and panic by following evidence-based strategies.	<a href="https://www.anxietycanada.com/resources/mindshift-cbt/">https://www.anxietycanada.com/resources/mindshift-cbt/</a>
<b>Breathr App</b>	This application, created by BC Children's Hospital's Dr. Vo and Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre, offers engaging ways for youth to engage in mindfulness practice using their phones.	<a href="https://keltymentalhealth.ca/breathr">https://keltymentalhealth.ca/breathr</a>
<b>The Inner Explorer HOME Mindfulness app For Families</b>	Helping parents raise mindful children – in the classroom and beyond.	<a href="https://innerexplorer.org/homeapp/">https://innerexplorer.org/homeapp/</a>

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