

Mindfulness within daily life for parents and children

Mindfulness is simply the art of keeping your attention in the present moment in a kind and compassionate manner. When introducing mindfulness to children remember that what is important is the **experience** of mindfulness rather than intellectual understanding. Mindfulness with children should be gentle, playful and fun. Be inspired by your own child's interests. Activities that include movement or a focus on sensation are often easier and more enjoyable for children than traditional sitting on a cushion meditations.

Some ideas to get you started:

- I spy game: take turns in choosing something that you can both see while the other person guesses. For older children the clue can be the beginning letter and for younger the color, for example, "I spy with my little eye something beginning with C".
- Mindful listening to sounds, for example to bird calls at the park, waves at the beach or the sound of a bell.
- Stargazing together, looking for the moon or particular constellations.
- Blowing bubbles together, chasing and popping the bubbles.
- Breathing with a pinwheel and watching it spin.
- Singing together: for younger children songs with physical actions might be particularly enjoyed such as *heads and shoulders* or *open shut them*.
- Dancing together: for younger children this might be dancing to children's music or songs with a strong beat and for older children dancing together to their favourite music. You can clap to the beat and support your child in noticing the feeling of their moving body.
- Clapping games such as *pat a cake*.
- Yoga poses or postures drawn from martial arts. Child friendly yoga resources are freely available on the internet.
- Noticing the sensations of play doh or sand.
- Playing with shadow puppets.
- Watching birds, fish or other animals together.
- Enjoying nature together.
- Drawing or colouring in together.
- Physical exercise such as running or swimming. Supporting your child to notice the feeling of their moving body.
- Painting together. This might include finger painting and noticing the feeling of the paint.