

INTRODUCTION

Mindfulness is the awareness of each of the senses in a conscious moment without judgement. The act of slowing your mind and body down and tuning into what is happening within, and outside of your body and your thoughts. By listening, feeling, tasting, touching and seeing, we are able to notice things that we may not have noticed had we been rushing or going about our daily lives. Conscious, mindful awareness is a powerful tool for wellbeing and self-care.

Journey into a discovery of focusing on feelings, listening to our bodies and indulging in the senses. This topic is suited to intentional teaching and focused activities which encourage positive mental health and resilience.

QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. How does your body feel when you take a deep, slow breath in? Does your mind slow down during this process?
2. Does your mind often get busy and full? What does this feel like? What can you do to empty your mind or slow it down?
3. What do you do to feel better when you are angry or sad or lonely?
4. How can you notice your thoughts and feelings without judging them?

ACTIVITY AND ENGAGEMENT

1. Practise some breathing exercises such as; breathe in for 3 seconds, hold for 2 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds. This type of breathing accesses the parasympathetic nervous system and lowers stress.
2. Practise a body scan. Find a body scan meditation online or create your own. Body area by body area, focus on each part going from the top of your head to your toes. Notice if there are any sensations on the top of your head, your face, front of your neck, back of your neck and so on. By isolating bodily sensations, children can learn how to focus on how their body reacts to stimulus and how to regulate emotions.
3. Go on a wonder walk. On your walk focus on the weather, the clouds, the sun on your skin. See if you can find bugs, plants or leaves. Lay down in the grass and focus on what is moving beneath what the eyes can usually see. Bring back some objects which you have found and put them under a magnifying glass or a microscope. What else can you see up close that you couldn't see upon first inspection? Perhaps take some macro photographs or create a collage with all the things you have found.
4. Blow some bubbles; big ones, small ones - watch them drift and pop! How many bubbles can you see, where do they go, how long do they stay floating for? Choose one bubble and focus on the way it moves through the air.
5. Read Enlighten Press' *Yoga and Movement* big book or compact edition and download the free yoga music from the Enlighten Press website. Practise some yoga animal poses. Stretch your body like a tiger, slither like a snake. Release tension and have some fun!
6. Drawing a single object like a flower or a simple object allows children to focus on shape and form – provide a range of interesting materials. Display similar art for reflection.
7. Jigsaw puzzles are great for mindfulness as well as promoting concentration and pre-literacy skills.
8. Gardening is an excellent activity to practise mindfulness. Weeding, planting, digging, harvesting all involve the whole body and mind on a single task.

9. Sensory focus day. Pick one sense to highlight each day over a week to focus on smell, taste, sound, sight and touch. Outline some special activities such as mindful eating to see what textures and flavours can be tasted, isolating sounds and counting how many different things can be heard, looking at objects very close up and very far away etc.
10. Fill a jar full of water and pour a big spoonful of glitter into the jar and put the lid on it. Shake the jar and watch the glitter swirl around. Ask the children to notice how the glitter settles after some time. Liken the glitter swirling to different emotions such as sadness, anger and fear - the glitter settles just like our big emotions do. Watching the swirling and settling is just like noticing our big emotions and breathing through them until they can settle.
11. Use *Mindfulness and Me* pages as focus and inspiration for your program and displays. Have the children choose a different page each day and participate in the exercises and suggestions in the pages.

THINKING POINTS FOR EDUCATORS

1. By implementing strategies to improve awareness, self-control, and resilience educators are able to supplement and complement existing practices by actively teaching children awareness of their bodies and emotions.
2. Practising mindfulness with the children shows them how to model emotional regulation and what it means to put it into daily practice.
3. Reassure the children it is common to get off track and let your thoughts wander. By trying to focus your mind again each time, you are training your brain to concentrate more on being mindful.

EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY 1.1 Children feel safe, secure, and supported 1.2 Children develop their emerging autonomy, interdependence, resilience and sense of agency 1.3 Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities 1.4 Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect
OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD 2.1 Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation 2.2 Children respond to diversity with respect 2.3 Children become aware of fairness 2.4 Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment
OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WELLBEING 3.1 Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing 3.2 Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing
OUTCOME 4: CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT AND INVOLVED LEARNERS 4.1 Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity 4.2 Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating 4.3 Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another 4.4 Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

OUTCOME 5: CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

- 5.1 Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes
- 5.2 Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts
- 5.3 Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media

LINKS TO THE CURRICULUM

Foundation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify personal strengths (ACPPS001) Name parts of the body and describe how their body is growing and changing (ACPPS002) Identify people and demonstrate protective behaviours and other actions that help keep themselves safe and healthy (ACPPS003) Practise personal and social skills to interact positively with others (ACPPS004) Identify and describe emotional responses people may experience in different situations (ACPPS005) Identify actions that promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS006) Participate in play that promotes engagement with outdoor settings and the natural environment (ACPPS007) Understand that language can be used to explore ways of expressing needs, likes and dislikes (ACELA1429) Explore the different contribution of words and images to meaning in stories and informative texts (ACELA1786)
Year 1 & 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe their own strengths and achievements and those of others, and identify how these contribute to personal identities (ACPPS015) Describe physical and social changes that occur as children grow older and discuss how family and community acknowledge these (ACPPS016) Practise strategies they can use when they feel uncomfortable, unsafe or need help with a task, problem or situation (ACPPS017) Recognise situations and opportunities to promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS018) Describe ways to include others to make them feel they belong (ACPPS019) Identify and practise emotional responses that account for own and others' feelings (ACPPS020) Examine health messages and how they relate to health decisions and behaviours (ACPPS021) Explore actions that help make the classroom a healthy, safe and active place (ACPPS022) Identify and explore natural and built environments in the local community where physical activity can take place (ACPPS023) Recognise similarities and differences in individuals and groups, and explore how these are celebrated and respected (ACPPS024)
Year 3

- Explore how success, challenge and failure strengthen identities (ACPPS033)
- Explore strategies to manage physical, social and emotional change (ACPPS034)
- Describe and apply strategies that can be used in situations that make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe (ACPPS035)
- Identify and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS036)
- Describe how respect, empathy and valuing diversity can positively influence relationships (ACPPS037)
- Investigate how emotional responses vary in depth and strength (ACPPS038)
- Discuss and interpret health information and messages in the media and internet (ACPPS039)
- Describe strategies to make the classroom and playground healthy, safe and active spaces (ACPPS040)

Social Emotional Learning Continuum - Australian Curriculum

Self-awareness

This element involves students developing an awareness of their own emotional states, needs and perspectives.

Students identify and describe the factors that influence their emotional responses. They develop a realistic sense of their personal abilities, qualities and strengths through knowing what they are feeling in the moment, and having a realistic assessment of their own abilities and a well-grounded sense of self-knowledge and self-confidence.

Students reflect on and evaluate their learning, identify personal characteristics that contribute to or limit their effectiveness and learn from successes or failures. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:

- recognise emotions
- recognise personal qualities and achievements
- understand themselves as learners
- develop reflective practice

Level 1a

Students:

Recognise emotions

recognise and identify their own emotions

Recognise personal qualities and achievements

express a personal preference

Understand themselves as learners

select tasks they can do in different learning contexts

Develop reflective practice

recognise and identify participation in or completion of a task

Level 1b

Typically by the end of Foundation Year, students:

Recognise emotions

identify a range of emotions and describe situations that may evoke these emotions

Recognise personal qualities and achievements

identify their likes and dislikes, needs and wants, and explore what influences these

Understand themselves as learners

identify their abilities, talents and interests as learners

Develop reflective practice

reflect on their feelings as learners and how their efforts affect skills and achievements

<p>Level 2 Typically by the end of Year 2, students:</p> <p>Recognise emotions compare their emotional responses with those of their peers</p> <p>Recognise personal qualities and achievements identify and describe personal interests, skills and achievements and explain how these contribute to family and school life</p>	<p>Understand themselves as learners discuss their strengths and weaknesses as learners and identify some learning strategies to assist them</p> <p>Develop reflective practice reflect on what they have learnt about themselves from a range of experiences at home and school</p>
<p><u>Self-management</u> This element involves students developing the metacognitive skill of learning when and how to use particular strategies to manage themselves in a range of situations. Students effectively regulate, manage and monitor their own emotional responses, and persist in completing tasks and overcoming obstacles. They develop organisational skills and identify the resources needed to achieve goals.</p>	<p>Students develop the skills to work independently and to show initiative, learn to be conscientious, delay gratification and persevere in the face of setbacks and frustrations. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • express emotions appropriately • develop self-discipline and set goals • work independently and show initiative • become confident, resilient and adaptable.
<p>Level 1a Students:</p> <p>Express emotions appropriately recognise and identify how their emotions influence the way they feel and act</p> <p>Develop self-discipline and set goals make a choice to participate in a class activity</p> <p>Work independently and show initiative attempt tasks with support or prompting</p> <p>Become confident resilient and adaptable identify people and situations with which they feel a sense of familiarity or belonging</p>	<p>Level 1b Typically by the end of Foundation Year, students:</p> <p>Express emotions appropriately express their emotions constructively in interactions with others</p> <p>Develop self-discipline and set goals follow class routines to assist learning</p> <p>Work independently and show initiative attempt tasks independently and identify when and from whom help can be sought</p> <p>Become confident resilient and adaptable identify situations that feel safe or unsafe, approaching new situations with confidence</p>
<p>Level 2</p>	<p>Work independently and show initiative work independently on routine tasks and experiment with strategies to complete other tasks where appropriate</p> <p>Become confident resilient and adaptable undertake and persist with short tasks, within the limits of personal safety</p>

<p>Typically by the end of Year 2, students:</p> <p>Express emotions appropriately describe ways to express emotions to show awareness of the feelings and needs of others</p> <p>Develop self-discipline and set goals set goals in learning and personal organisation by completing tasks within a given time</p>	
<p><u>Social awareness</u> This element involves students recognising others' feelings and knowing how and when to assist others. Students learn to show respect for and understand others' perspectives, emotional states and needs. They learn to participate in positive, safe and respectful relationships, defining and accepting individual and group roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p>Students gain an understanding of the role of advocacy in contemporary society and build their capacity to critique societal constructs and forms of discrimination, such as racism and sexism. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appreciate diverse perspectives • contribute to civil society • understand relationships.
<p>Level 1a Students: Social Awareness show an awareness for the feelings, needs and interests of others</p>	<p>Level 1b Typically by the end of Foundation Year, students: Appreciate diverse perspectives acknowledge that people hold many points of view Contribute to civil society describe ways they can help at home and school Understand relationships explore relationships through play and group experiences</p>
<p>Level 2 Typically by the end of Year 2, students: Appreciate diverse perspectives describe similarities and differences in points of view between themselves and people in their communities</p>	<p>Contribute to civil society describe how they contribute to their homes, classrooms and local communities, and how others care for and assist them Understand relationships identify ways to care for others, including ways of making and keeping friends</p>

Social management

This element involves students interacting effectively and respectfully with a range of adults and peers.

Students learn to negotiate and communicate effectively with others; work in teams, positively contribute to groups and collaboratively make decisions; resolve conflict and reach positive outcomes. They develop the ability to initiate and manage successful personal relationships, and participate in a range of social and communal activities.

Social management involves building skills associated with leadership, such as mentoring and role modelling. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:

- communicate effectively
- work collaboratively
- make decisions
- negotiate and resolve conflict
- develop leadership skills.

Level 1a

Students:

Social Management

respond to the feelings, needs and interests of others

Level 1b

Typically by the end of Foundation Year, students:

Communicate effectively

identify positive ways to initiate, join and interrupt conversations with adults and peers

Work collaboratively

share experiences of cooperation in play and group activities

Make decisions

identify options when making decisions to meet their needs and the needs of others

Negotiate and resolve conflict

listen to others' ideas, and recognise that others may see things differently from them

Develop leadership skills

identify ways to take responsibility for familiar tasks at home and school

Level 2

Typically by the end of Year 2, students:

Communicate effectively

discuss the use of verbal and nonverbal communication skills to respond appropriately to adults and peers

Work collaboratively

identify cooperative behaviours in a range of group activities

Make decisions

practise individual and group decision making in situations such as class meetings and when working in pairs and small groups

Negotiate and resolve conflict

practise solving simple interpersonal problems, recognising there are many ways to solve conflict

Develop leadership skills

discuss ways in which they can take responsibility for their own actions