

Kindy Kids Connect

Build & cultivate resilience in children.



In this issue:

- Tips for parents
- Supports available at school
- Keeping Calm And Connected: Mindfulness Sessions
- The benefits of mindfulness for kids

MINDFULNESS

We all need time for ourselves to just stop, reflect and find an inner calm. Finding these moments are known as mindfulness and can often take practice. When we practice mindfulness, the goal is to pay attention to what is happening in the present moment, by slowing down and just noticing. When children develop the ability to direct their attention to the present moment, they learn to control their behaviour and become less reactive and calmer. This supports children's ability to embrace empowerment, choice, and freedom. Starting mindfulness at an early age can increase focus & attention for the rest of their academic careers. This tip sheet will give you some suggestions in how you can get started.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. Create time for calm

Creating time to relax and just breathe is essential, especially in our busy lives. Breathing activities, guided imagery, or other practices to relax the body and mind have been linked to number of health benefits and can also improve focus and concentration. Heartbeat Exercise, ask your child to stand up and do 20-star jumps. At the end, have them place their hand on their heart and pay attention to how their heartbeat and breathing feels. Get them to describe what they notice and how their heartbeat starts to slow down now they are resting. When you notice your child feeling stressed or fidgety, get them to practice this exercise as a way to use all that extra energy and a way to calm down.

2. Find time to meditate and just breathe

There are many breathing techniques that help lower stress in the body and help us to calm down and relax. One simple breathing exercise requires finding a quiet place, sit comfortably, and set a timer for one minute. Take a deep breath in through your nose, hold that breath

for 5 seconds noticing the air filling your lungs then slowly breathe out through your mouth allowing all your stress to escape. You can also use meditation apps that incorporate breathing techniques for children such as Smiling Mind.

3. Create visual routines

Use visual reminders to help prompt children with things like brushing their teeth or packing their school bag. This helps your child develop responsibility and independence.

4. Sleep routines

Sleep deprivation and inconsistent bedtimes impact on learning, mood, and behaviour. To help your child relax and wind down before bed, play them a bedtime meditation each night or get them to read a book. Calming their minds in this way may increase their chances of having a sounder sleep.

5. Slow down!

To help your child slow down, try getting them to act like a robot for 2 minutes and get them to practice walking slower and talking slower. Slowing down can promote calmness and problem-solving

skills as they learn to take a step back and think about the situation at hand.

6. Quiet mindful moments

Have regular times in your house where noise is consciously turned down, devices are switched off and everyone in the family takes time out to just 'be' instead of doing all the time. Dinner time is usually the best time to start to practice mindful moments, it also helps families bond better.

7. Go outside

Spending time in nature has enormous benefits for us all. Make sure you and your family frequently spend time outdoors, whether it's picnicking on the back lawn, walking on the beach or visiting a park. Play scavenger hunt games to help your child practice focus and concentration on tasks.

8. Create a safe haven

It's important that we all have a place we can call our own and feel safe, a space to practice self-soothing activities and mindfulness. This space can be inside or outside and it's important it is known its purpose for using this space.

Supports available at school

School staff
Pastoral care staff
CatholicCare school counselling program



Keeping Calm and Connected: Mindfulness Sessions

We provide a series of recorded mindfulness webinars on our website. They provide an opportunity to re-focus, re-energise and re-connect with who we are. These sessions provide an understanding of the benefits of mindfulness as well as some practical strategies to implement. The webinar provides a great opportunity for the whole family to practice mindfulness together.

Access the recordings here:

www.catholiccare.dow.org.au/services-and-programs/family/family-care/courses/ then search 'Mindfulness'



THE BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS FOR KIDS

- Improve mental health and wellbeing
- Increased focus, attention, self-control, classroom participation, and compassion
- Improved academic performance
- Ability to resolve conflict
- Decreased levels of stress, depression, anxiety, and disruptive behaviour
- Improves self-awareness, social awareness, and self-confidence
- Stay calm under stress
- Improves sleep, resilience, and memory