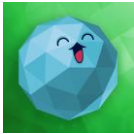




Mindfulness

Mindfulness does not have to be complicated, require hours of our time or even cost money. Simply put, mindfulness is being aware of what is going on around us at the moment and what are the intentions we are trying to fulfill. Mindfulness can help children and adults focus, cope with stress and in a way, quiet the chaos that is our life at the moment. Simple mindfulness activities look like contracting the muscles, belly breathing, meditation, coloring or listening to music. Other ways to practice mindfulness is to use what we have around us all the time, technology. Below are different apps for iOS and Android to help children (and their parents) in practicing mindfulness.



Mindful Powers (2nd-5th)

Mindful Powers is a good app for introducing grade-schoolers to mindfulness. It guides kids through a series of meditations, called “stories,” that each build on each other. This is different from many meditation apps, which require kids to pick and choose what to do on their own. Kids work with a “Flibbertigibbet,” a cute round sea creature that helps them stay focused and breathe. The app uses a child’s voice, and it has a youthful look and feel.

Price: Free to try (\$4.99 for the full app) Available for: iOS



Breathe, Think, Do With Sesame

This free Sesame Street app isn’t specifically for meditation, but it’s great for introducing very young kids to the concept of calming down through breathing. The app teaches kids the “Breathe, Think, Do” method. Kids help an animated monster facing a frustrating situation to calm down by taking long, deep breaths. Afterwards, they help the monster think of a solution and do it.

Price: Free Available for: Android, iOS

Three Good Things: A Happiness Journal

Although not for meditation, this free journaling app can help kids build mindfulness based on a simple premise: If kids write down three good things that happen to them each day, they'll feel happier. The app is very easy to use. After kids enter their name, they're asked to write a few words about something good that happened that day, then a second and third thing. They can use the app to set a reminder to write each day, and they can look over past journal entries.

Price: Free Available for: iOS



Stop, Breathe & Think

Stop, Breathe & Think is a simple meditation app for kids in middle school and older. It has guided meditations and breathing exercises, as well as written instructions on how to meditate. Kids can share how their mind and body are feeling, and the app suggests a meditation based on that. The app also tracks total meditation time and how “settled” kids report they feel.

Price: Free to try (\$9.99 per month subscription) Available for: Android, iOS

Mindfulness Videos

Mindfulness ps-2nd

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k_R7R1gldA

Book Reading “I’m Bored” Ps-2nd

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63fdm6BT4_A

Cure for Boredom ps-2nd

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFqjCPv2Pk>

For more information on mindfulness, relaxation or boredom busters, visit our Counselor’s corner at <https://sites.google.com/svusdk12.net/counselingcorner/home>.

Sensory

Mindfulness teaches us how to be more aware of our environment which we achieve through different activities. Sensory play allows us to explore our world through the sense of sight, smell, sound, taste and touch. By narrowing our intention to one of our senses, we can engage our focus and attention naturally. Some sensory activities include calm down jars, coloring books, putty/slime/play dough, glow sticks, animal walking, heavy loads (moving laundry baskets/large but soft items from one side of the house to the other) and finger painting. Like with mindfulness, when our sensory system needs are met, we can better attend and respond to a number of tasks and engage in positive social interactions as it helps with emotional regulation.

Sensory Activities

Letter/word finder- place letters of the alphabet or sight words in rice, beans or water beads. Have your child reach in and remove each item. As the child removes each item, have them name the letter or recite the sight word.

Sensory Crafts- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuYaH12pNFI>

Activities with Kinetic sand <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuYaH12pNFI>

Fine Motor Skills- Items you already have in your home can also easily be repurposed as sensory tools. Spray shaving cream on the kitchen table and let your kids spread it around, draw images, or write words and numbers to release energy while boosting fine motor skills. You can also let your kids rip, fold, and crinkle different types of paper such as wrapping, tissue, and magazine paper.

Sensory Bags-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8LEvgbyJ4EE>

Sensory Bin: Sensory bins, or any container filled with items that stimulate one or more of the five senses, offer a relaxing, low-demand activity for children, and can be made by filling a container with items like dry beans, rice, or pasta, and cotton balls, for example. Add tools like measuring cups, sifters, and shovels to encourage kids to explore. For an added element of fun, you can make colored rice with your kid using a bag of store-bought rice and food coloring. Colored Rice- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Az7WnGa9hrM>

Sensory Path: Sensory paths, or a path made with common items like cut-out arrows, pillows, and furniture, can prompt your kid to walk, bend, and hop, which will help to regulate their bodies and transition them to the next activity. Go through the obstacle course with your child beforehand, so they'll know what to do when.

Sensory Paths ideas- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gDefbr7Vlro>

Pressure: Some children benefit from feeling pressure on their body, which helps activate their parasympathetic response, lowering the heart rate and reducing stress. Other than a simple hug or squeeze, children find "burrito rolls" relaxing, aptly named for looking like a burrito once rolled up inside a blanket or sheet. You can also have a child sit with a set of heavy books in their lap or make a weighted lap pad by filling a large sock with rice.

Sock Snowman <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnHMK7m9ztk>

Parent Tip

Mindfulness has many benefits we can utilize during this time (or anytime really) and as parents, there are many different ways we can incorporate it into distance learning. Some ways to maintain or integrate mindfulness is

- Use mindfulness apps, or mindfulness techniques throughout the day
- Practice mindfulness as a family and when everyone is calm
- Engage in sensory play to help regain and sustain attention
- Be creative with incorporating school activities, exercise and social emotional learning

In the midst of this pandemic, distance learning, quarantine and uncertainty, it is vitally important you remember your own self care (you as in a parent/adult/human). Take time to fill up your own cup in order to be the best provider you can be. Adjusting to change can be hard, takes time, and requires patience. Remember, we're here for you.

-Your SVUSD team

