



A WAY OF BEING WITH CHILDREN

Mindful Parenting

Tips to Promote Child Well-Being and Resilience

What is Mindfulness?

According to the American Psychological Association, Mindfulness is: "awareness of one's internal states and surroundings. The concept has been applied to various therapeutic interventions—for example, mindfulness-based cognitive behavior therapy, mindfulness-based stress reduction, and mindfulness meditation—to help people avoid destructive or automatic habits and responses by learning to observe their thoughts, emotions, and other present-moment experiences without judging or reacting to them."



Mindfulness Key Components

- Bringing awareness to experience
 - Paying attention on purpose
- Practicing non-judgement
 - Removing good/bad labels and rather seeing things for what they are
- Being non-reactive
 - When we react, it's often automatic. Being nonreactive, means pausing, connecting to the moment i.e. mindfulness and choosing your response



While a meditation practice is ONE way to practice mindfulness, it's certainly not the only way. Mindfulness is about awareness of present moment experiences and can include paying attention to the breath, reducing multi-tasking, journaling, time in nature, mindful meals, active listening or daily emotion check-ins and self-reflection.

Mindful Parenting

Mindful parenting has a twofold purpose – awareness of one's own emotional state as well having a deeper meaning of child's emotional state. When we can bring awareness to our own emotional state, the impact that it may have on co-regulation (take a look at our co-regulation training) and how we're responding, we are supporting ourselves in recognizing our needs and in making better choices in those moments. It also allows us a better understanding of the child and what his/her thoughts and feelings are. This creates improved understanding and communication, more effective problem-solving, and strengthens the trust and relationship bond.



Benefits of Mindful Parenting

- Improves parent-child communication
- Strengthens parent-child relationships
- Improves parenting satisfaction
- Improves overall family wellness
- Promotes parental involvement
- Boosts parental stress management
- Decreases parental symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Lessens parent and child aggression
- Reduces child impulsive behaviors
- Promotes child decision-making skills
- Improves child self-regulation
- Reduces risk of blind anger/maltreatment



Tips to Practice Mindful Parenting

Identify, name and discuss emotions.

Using daily check-ins, “which three feelings came up the most for you today?” are helpful.

Practice acceptance.

Feelings are always valid, however, sometimes expressions/behaviors driven by those emotions need a little extra help and support. Try not to shame a child for experiencing an emotion. For example, it’s healthy and acceptable to be angry. However, it’s not safe to hit someone/throw objects. Instead, develop healthy coping skills to express and regulate those emotions. Remember, behaviors are symptoms of emotions.

Practice “pause” moments.

Integrating moments to “pause, look and listen” allow grounding, awareness of surroundings and promote connection to the present moment.

Practice gratitude.

This is a fantastic way to stay grounded to experiences and feelings and promote a feeling of being present, grateful, calm and happy.

Using structure and routine.

When things are predictable, it eases big emotions like uncertainty and anxiety and allows a child to be mindful of what is happening throughout the day.

See the world from the child's perspective.

Everything is new, exciting and full of potential for a child. We could all use a reminder of this approach to life! Try to match their excitement and emotion through your conversations – this shows connection and understanding.

Model and practice self-care.

Practicing self-care independently models this skill, and practicing it together as a family helps children learn and utilize those skills too.

Use books and stories to introduce mindfulness.

Stories can highlight experiences, thoughts and feelings a child may have had that are relatable as well as teach ways to include mindfulness into daily life.

Practice moments of quiet/meditation.

Having these calm, peaceful times to regulate one’s mind/body can assist the child throughout the day. This can also be used in the child’s daily routine - perhaps between activities or before going to bed. The more that this skill is practiced, the stronger it is!

Remember - some is better than none!

There’s no such thing as a “perfect” mindfulness practice. But rather, a little practice each day has cumulative benefits for child and family!

Scan for Resources



www.centerforchildcounseling.org/awayofbeing

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