

Mindfulness for Children

The best way to capture moments is to pay attention. This is how we cultivate mindfulness. Mindfulness means being awake. It means knowing what you are doing - Jon Kabat-Zinn

Parents oftentimes ask me, “What one thing can I do with my child to help him or her?” and I oftentimes reply, “Add a mindfulness practice into your daily life.” One simple mindfulness practice done consistently with your children can help them calm and connect to their inner peace. The place within that isn’t chaotic and troubled by the latest text, bully at school or mean comment from their sibling. So whether it’s a gratitude bedtime practice, deep breathing (one hand on stomach, one on heart) or use of mindfulness apps, most children can learn to pay attention and bring themselves back to a calm place even in the midst of a challenge.

So to help in this process, I’m going to share 5 Mindfulness Apps, which can help you and your children begin a practice of mindfulness (and healthy use of technology too).

Mindfulness Apps for Children

Smiling Mind. This app has great body scan meditations to help children develop the awareness of what’s happening in their bodies. Learning about what’s happening in your body is one of the first steps of an authentic mindfulness practice.

<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>

Headspace (for Kids). This app teaches parents and children together about meditation for different age levels. They focus on: Calm, Kindness and Bedtime.

<https://www.headspace.com/kids>

Calm. This app provides mindfulness and sleep stories for children of varying ages. Several parents I know use the app to help their children relax, and restore themselves after a full day of running around. <https://www.calm.com/>

Three Good Things: A Happiness Journal. This app is simple and easy-to-use helping children focus on the positive and recognizing what went well today. (Ages 6 and up) Every child gets to list three things daily that went well, which begins to train their mind to look for things to appreciate and begin a gratitude practice. <https://apple.co/2nGXBgo>

Insight Timer. This app is free with meditations for parents and children. They focus on relaxation, managing stress, concentration and sleep, as examples.

<https://insighttimer.com/>

Raising Mindfulness: One Breath at a Time

Children need more than ever to learn how to calm and re-centre themselves in this world full of opportunities to get off-balance. Whether they’re having difficulty with a “mean girl or boy” at school or recovering from a natural disaster such as many of my Santa Barbara clients, the world is constantly providing us lessons, which we can use to remember that inside of us is everything we need including the ability to get calm and begin again.

Maureen Healy is a popular speaker, emotional coach and leader in the world of children's social and emotional learning. Her book, *Growing Happy Kids*, has won multiple awards and her new book, *Raising an Emotionally Healthy Child*, hits the shelves in the Fall, 2018.