

Introducing Mindfulness to your Daily Routine

Mindfulness can simply be described as paying attention to what is happening right now with kindness and curiosity. In Aistear's theme of Well-being one of the Learning Goal states that in partnership with the adult children will 'become reflective and think flexibly'. Mindfulness will provide children with the time and space to think and question what is around them. Including mindfulness into your daily routine can be accomplished quite simply.

It is first recommended that you have experience and an understanding of mindfulness yourself. There is a wealth of information available on mindfulness. [This](#) is an interesting article and may be of some value.

Help children to understand what mindfulness is— This is most effective when it is explained in an age appropriate manner. For instance, in this website the scene from [Kungfu Panda at the Peach Tree](#) can be used to show children what it means to be in the present moment and how to act with kindness. Alternatively, there is an article [here](#) on helping children to understand the premise of mindfulness whilst role-playing as Spiderman. You may wish to use a word children can understand rather than mindfulness—for example 'taking notice'.



Ideas for Introducing Mindfulness into the Preschool

- Use teddy bears/ soft toys to help children become aware of their breath— Ask the children to place the soft toy on their tummy as they lie down. Gently encourage them to notice what happens to the soft toy as they breathe in and out.
- Blowing bubbles can be another lesson in helping children to become aware of their breath. Guide them towards thinking about what happens as they make the bubbles. This increases their curiosity in that moment too.
- A Mind Jar—These are also known as ‘Calm down Jars’ or ‘Meditation Bottles’. They provide healthy and effective ways for children to help soothe themselves, calm down, take deep breaths, and work through their emotions. When used effectively these bottles can bring children back to the present and help them to self-regulate. See this [article](#) for the ways in which the Mind jar can be used to teach children about mindfulness. These bottles can be created by the children themselves. They can be made from a range of materials including glitter, beads, sequins, loom bands etc. For ideas on how to make sensory bottles click [here](#).
- Listening for sounds—This is an age-appropriate technique for helping children to focus on being in the present moment. This can be done indoors or outdoors. When introducing this activity it may be useful to use a bell or something equally distinct for the children to grasp the purpose of the activity. Ask the children to remain silent and to raise their hand once they no longer hear the bell ringing. Then ask them to remain silent for one minute and listen to any other sounds they heard during this time. Afterwards a discussion can take place about all the sounds they noticed.
- Smell—Playing a game where children use their sense of smell to remain in the present moment. This can be flowers, scented oil, cocoa etc.
- Try to keep your mindfulness practice short so children do not lose interest or focus. Mindfulness should not be forced onto children as something that they have to do—it is most effective when there is choice involved. The more interesting and age-appropriate it is the more the children will be drawn to it.

These are only a few ideas for introducing mindfulness to your daily routine. For more ideas on how to build on your mindfulness practice click [here](#).

