
Chill: Mindfulness in Education

A Weekly Wellness Program of Mindfulness Based Tools and Strategies for Teachers and Students K-8



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Introduction

To attend to development of mind and body, the *Chill* project weaves mindfulness exercises in mental fitness, health, and compassionate character into the regular school day. The central objective of *Chill* is to give kids tools to help them improve attention, self-control and emotional resilience.

Using Mindful Schools' proven awareness and concentration practices, kids learn how to settle a busy mind, skillfully handle emotions and thoughts, direct and sustain attention, cultivate compassion, and truly listen and communicate to one another.

A practice,
not a fad

Mindfulness

At the heart of *Chill*, is mindfulness. Mindfulness means maintaining a moment by moment awareness of our thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations and surrounding environment. The reason this is so important is that by becoming mindful we can choose our response to what is going on inside us and around us, rather than react habitually or unskillfully to those events and circumstances. Students do better in school when they are mindful of their own thoughts and feelings, can empathize with others, understand their bodies, and practice healthy lifestyle habits.

Short,
simple,
adaptable

Curriculum

The **Mindful Schools** curriculum, developed by world-class educators, scientists, and practitioners, teaches elementary school students to cultivate focus, resilience, and well-being for academic success. The ten to fifteen minute mindfulness activities integrate easily into your school day.

Expert Mindfulness Facilitator and Practitioner



Susan Gioia is a Mindfulness Trainer certified in the Mindful Schools curriculum. She is also an accomplished personal practitioner who will support your teachers and students with inspiration and support for mindful teaching, developing a personal practice and in effective ways to bring mindfulness to others.

Typical Session

A ten minute blast of mindfulness twice a week

- **Mission:** helping children ingrate their inner experiences, transform their difficult emotions into wisdom, and learn skills for growing as creative, intelligent, kind and conscious human beings.
- Developing adolescents: developing minds, building good habits. The foundational concept of mindfulness in education is that developing adolescents make more positive choices when they are confidently grounded and able to name and deal with their emotions.
- **Typical session-**
- Mindfulness classes typically begin with an opening bell and a “check-in” of where we are. Kind of like taking our emotional temperature.
- Throughout the lessons, students are asked to focus on breath, body, thoughts. Awareness of their breath and making contact with their bodies is the first step and anchor to prepare for the new skill or lesson of the day.
- Some students report feeling “warm” and “energized”; others report feeling “tired” or “slow”...whatever their experience, we honor it. Empowerment comes from being able to accurately name how we are in the moment and, if needed, to then recognize and choose a suitable response to better ourselves and our situation. Mindfulness is not about controlling the child, it’s about teaching the child to control his/her attention and choose how to act wisely.
- When teaching, I have learned to become as adaptable as they have proven to be. Some days are **Chill**, some days are **Mindful Movements**.
- Every now and then, I’m a little off. So, I teach from there. It’s an opportunity to “practice what I preach”. I stop, slow down, slow them down, to create some space for witnessing rather than reacting to this moment of “chaos”. So far, it works! While tending to my own frustration, we deal with theirs. No judgment, settle and ground myself, pull it together and we all move on.
- Most kids ask to ring the bell, or lead the sit.
- We end with a bell to return to normal, let your eyes open, a thank you for practicing with me, and a see ya’ soon!

CHILL: Mindfulness in Education



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Chill is a program designed to bring mindfulness education into schools through weekly direct instruction in classrooms, teacher training throughout the school year, and monthly community meetings for families.

Twice a week, for 8 weeks, I spend between ten and fifteen minutes in classrooms teaching different mindfulness lessons to students and working with the school staff. I offer a weekly **Mindful Morning** for teachers and staff before school in the spirit of that week's mindfulness lesson for kids. **Mind Club** is a monthly 30-minute mindfulness session for parents interested in how to bring mindfulness to their home.

Using **Mindful Schools'** Curriculum in the classrooms, I take about five minutes to explain this lesson's skill that we will be working on and then we have our ten minutes of practice and skill building. These lessons include breathing activities, relaxation and self-soothing exercises, a little explanation of brain science, reading stories about emotions, as well as playing games that help them become more self-aware.

MINDFULNESS FOR KIDS

Mindfulness with children has been shown to improve focus, help promote self-regulation and self-awareness, increase empathy and compassion, help build conflict resolution skills, and improve self-confidence and relationships with others. Bringing mindfulness into learning environments can help improve both cognitive and academic performance through teaching children ways to become more present and self-aware.

MINDFULNESS FOR TEACHERS

CHILL is meant to be a resource that helps support teachers by providing them with ways they can help support their students' mindfulness skills, give them ideas for bringing more mindfulness into their classrooms, and offer suggestions for different ways they can develop their own mindfulness practice.

Providing educators with mindfulness training can help increase their sense of well-being, their ability to manage classroom behavior, develop skills to help reduce stress, and can help them establish and maintain positive and supportive relationships with students. Teachers will be learning these skills right alongside their students, which provides a unique and meaningful opportunity for students and teachers to connect in a new way that benefits the social and emotional health of everyone, both inside the classroom and out

A FEW RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS



MINDFUL SCHOOLS

***MINDFUL SCHOOLS'** website is a great resource and support tool for teachers.

<http://www.mindfulschools.org>



Mindful

***MINDFUL** is a website with interesting articles, stories and links that may help you learn more about mindfulness as you develop your own personal practice.

<http://www.mindful.org>



The Gift of Mindfulness

How many times have we parents, teachers and coaches asked kids to “pay attention”? Some of us may have asked them to “calm down or chill out”. Now, how many of us have explained to them how to do that?

Well that’s what we do with mindfulness. We teach techniques to help kids calm their minds and train their attention. Mindfulness practiced often will make these techniques a healthy habit.

Kids are full of energy, highly inquisitive, mentally restless and sometimes even intense. Children experience all the psychological issues adults do, but without a vocabulary to express anxiety, stress, sensitivity, it’s hard to teach them how to handle these uncomfortable emotions skillfully.

Mindfulness is a low-cost, natural tool that can be taught to children and has shown promising results including improved memory and focus, reduced stress, and better relationships. (Khoury, Sharma, Rush & Fournier, 2015)

Attention is very trainable. As we practice being mindful, we will gain more control over our attention. This small thing, repeated routinely adds up over time to produce big results.

Introduction to Mindfulness (Adolescents)

Why Mindfulness?

We spend a lot of time developing our intelligence in school, and strengthening our bodies through sports and exercise. But here, we are going to spend some time working with our minds, specifically, our attention. When we develop and strengthen our mind we are increasing our ability to focus, recognize and manage our emotions, make better decisions, and develop relationships with others.

Definition of Mindfulness- Paying Attention on Purpose

Mindfulness is paying attention to what is happening now in a way that **allows us to choose** our response rather than just react out of habit. It is a way of settling all the stuff whizzing around in your mind, even when our life circumstances may feel out of our control.

Mindfulness is about stepping back and seeing thoughts and feelings come and go, without judgement, but with a relaxed mind, fully focused on the present moment.

Relevance

Raise your hand if you have ever:

- Said something you wish you could take back?
- Done something you later wished you hadn't done?
- Felt nervous or anxious about a test, a tryout or performance?
- Been in a bad mood but not sure why?
- Been spacing out in class when a teacher called on you?
- Had trouble falling asleep because your mind won't be quiet or your body feels restless?
- Noticed that you do much better in school, music or sports when you are really focused?

Resetting nervous system

Learn how to calm your nervous system.

Shallow breathing that only uses the upper part of the chest
keeps you in state of fight or flight

Clear your mind and reset your nervous system.

Simply by slowing down your breathing, your body
will get the message that you are safe.

See? In all these situations- our feelings or thoughts are kind of pushing and pulling us around. Did you feel like you were in control in any of these situations?

Well, when we are mindful, we take control of our mind and we choose what to do next instead of letting our emotions or feelings pull and push us around. It's time, you're getting big enough to do this.

Technique

The techniques we will be practicing are really quite simple. We will be mindful of sound breath, movements, thoughts, emotions, surroundings and a few other things. If you try to pay attention on purpose a little every day you'll be gently strengthening and developing your mind and attention.

Posture

Every time we practice mindfulness, we will start by getting in mindful posture. A mindful posture has five guidelines:

1. Facing forward
2. Back is upright
3. Stillness
4. Mind and body are relaxed and alert
5. Eyes closed or soft

Let's try one minute.

everybody feels stress differently.

Maybe it feels like a tightness of fullness in the pit of your stomach. Maybe it feels like a headache. Maybe you have trouble getting to sleep.

These are all totally normal ways the human body reacts to stress. The good news is, mindfulness can help. Mindfulness is all about being in the present moment, with compassion toward yourself and others.

Some scary events can be translated by different nervous systems in different ways.

Our nervous system's evaluation of risk - is functionally unpredictable and it happens w/o our awareness. We don't know how our nervous system will respond.

Same event being translated by different nervous systems in different ways.

Controlling your attention - becoming more able to place it where you want it

Nat Geo - Science
Call of the Wild -

NICARM.COM

Tuttle v. Jadenablos

Ridethansen



May 9, 2016

Dear Friends at Westchester Elementary,


What a pleasure and honor it has been to work with you these past few weeks in your mindfulness practice. I'm delighted that you've chosen to bring mindfulness to real, day-to-day issues; finding more calm, centeredness and richness in experience.

For those who feel challenged by the practice— that is as it should be. The instructions are simple in theory, yet very hard to do in practice. We are starting to challenge our habitual patterns of mind, and that feels uncomfortable and strange at first— and it takes persistence. I hope those of you who were touched by the project go on to find additional resources, practice buddies and communities that will help your practice flourish. I am happy to help you in any way I can.

One thing is for sure, life will continue to happen. Ups and downs for all of us. But there is a way to relate to them so we're not tugged around helplessly from impulsive reaction to unconsidered action and back again, like a seesaw of reactivity. Mindfulness is one way (the best way I know) to cultivate a stability of mind that can see clearly, fully, and also allow us space to consider the wise response.

I can say with full confidence that these mind- and heart-training skills, when practiced diligently, sincerely, and with proper guidance, will continue to deepen your understanding. It is this understanding, and the compassion and kindness that arise from understanding, that become our refuge and safe harbor through all of life's ups and downs. You've had a small taste of the changes that can happen; if you keep going with the practice, I promise it will continue to bear fruit.

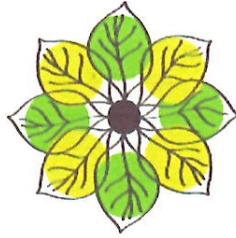
Thank you,


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April 18, 2016

Dear friends at Westchester Elementary,

I wanted to say what a pleasure and honor it is to get to work with you these next few weeks in starting or continuing a mindfulness practice. I'm delighted that you've chosen to bring mindfulness to real, day-to-day issues; finding more calm, centeredness, and richness in experience.

For those who feel challenged by the practice-- that is as it should be. The instructions are simple in theory, yet very hard to do in practice. We are starting to challenge our habitual patterns of mind, and that feels uncomfortable and strange at first-- and it takes persistence. I hope those of you who were touched by the course go on to find additional resources, practice buddies and communities that will help your practice flourish. I am happy to help you in any way I can.

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