



MINDUPTM

Parent Workshop for
Parents and Caregivers



A PUBLICATION OF
The HAWN FOUNDATION
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS!



“

I created MindUP with educators, for educators to help them improve student engagement in learning, academics, focus and give them some tools and strategies to bring joy back into the classroom. It is my greatest hope that every teacher who uses MindUP will find it beneficial both personally and in their work.

”

– **Goldie Hawn,**

Founder of The Hawn Foundation

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Welcome to MindUP™

Welcome to The Hawn Foundation's MindUP™ Parent Workshop. We sincerely hope you enjoy and benefit from this experience.

Originally, the MindUP™ program was developed for the use of teachers in the classroom setting. Research shows that a nurturing classroom within a safe school is an effective learning environment. Students learn best when they are comfortable, confident and have positive feelings for their teachers and peers. The MindUP™ program teaches a set of social, emotional, and self-regulatory strategies and skills developed for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade-aged children to cultivate wellbeing and emotional balance. The MindUP™ Parent Workshop was developed to bring the same relational and emotional intelligence skills into our homes and families. A MindUP™ family embarks on a journey together— a journey that equips us to deepen our relationships with each other and infuses our life with joy, optimism, and meaning. It is a different way of being in the world. It is a way that is informed by understanding how the brain works, cultivating our ability to slow down and savor the present moment, and ensuring the world is a better place because we are in it.

Through a series of easy-to-implement lessons anchored in current brain research and evidence-based practices in social and emotional learning, The Hawn Foundation's MindUP™ Parent Workshop provide you and your family with opportunities to cultivate self-awareness and focused attention. The main purpose of this integrated curriculum is to help children and caregivers become mindful of themselves and their actions. Dr. Daniel Siegel, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at UCLA's School of Medicine, suggests that the better we understand our own thoughts and feelings, the more we are aware—and in control of—our own behavior. Rather than judging and reacting to what occurs in our lives, we learn to observe and respond thoughtfully. MindUP™ supports what we know about how children learn, and it augments their abilities to become resilient, mindful, optimistic and thriving human beings.

The MindUP™ principles and strategies can be implemented in every area of your day-to-day life with your children. The MindUP™ Parent Workshop is not a separate program delivered in isolation from what you already do as a parent with your children. It is integrative in nature and is an effective approach to parenting and teaching vital social and emotional skills to your children. It does not necessarily replace any part of your parenting strategy, but strengthens how you teach and interact with your children by understanding how they learn and approach life.

Benefiting from MindUP™ will not happen overnight. You must be willing to practice its simple techniques, reinforce learned behaviors, and faithfully promote the program's vision on a daily basis. If you do, your children will become more effective learners, more empathetic people, and truer friends. It will help prepare your children for success in career, family, and life.

We welcome you to explore with us the tremendous benefits of MindUP™ and utilizing it within your family.

Warm Regards,
The MindUP™ Training Staff
The Hawn Foundation

MindUP™ Parent Workshop

MindUP™, The Hawn Foundation's signature educational program, is a set of social, emotional, and self-regulatory strategies and skills developed for pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade aged children designed to cultivate wellbeing and emotional balance. A MindUP™ Family faces the same challenges as any other family will, but they have a wealth of strategies to help them successfully navigate difficulties. Instead of being overwhelmed by life circumstances, they view all experiences as opportunities for growth. When the going gets tough, a MindUP™ Family is able to move toward each other with empathy, compassion and predictability. Incorporating the ideas outlined in this workshop can potentially transform your family.



The MindUP™ program is endorsed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). CASEL is focused on advancing the science and evidence-based practice of social-emotional learning and have identified five key competencies, which are reflected in the MindUP™ curriculum:

Assessing our feelings, interests, values, and strengths; maintaining self-confidence

Self-Management: Regulating emotions to handle stress, control impulses, and persevere in overcoming obstacles

Social Awareness: Understanding different perspectives and empathizing with others; recognizing and appreciating similarities and differences; using family, school, and community resources effectively

Relationship Skills: Maintaining healthy relationships based on cooperation; resisting inappropriate social pressure; preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal conflicts; seeking help when needed

Responsible Decision Making: Considering ethical, academic and community standards when making choices or decisions

Promoting Optimal Learning in the Developing Brain & Enhancing Family Relationships!

Social & Emotional Learning Core Competencies



The MindUP™ Program fosters the “6 C’s” of academic success and emotional wellbeing for the 21st century student:

- **Communication**
- **Creativity**
- **Collaboration**
- **Critical Thinking**
- **Curiosity**
- **Compassion**

PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 1: The MindUP™ Brain

As a parent, understanding the links between the brain and behavior can be enlightening. We can see our children's behavior more objectively when we are able to put it into a biological context. An understanding of your child's developing brain can help to lower your parental frustration and increase the effectiveness of your responses. We don't all have to be neuroscientists; however, learning a few key facts about the brain can optimize our ability to help our children navigate childhood and become successful adults. In the MindUP™ curriculum, children learn about four main parts of the brain: the Amygdala, the Pre-frontal Cortex, the Hippocampus, and the Reticular Activating System. Children of all ages love learning interesting facts about their brain. It is powerful for kids to begin learning about their brain because it allows them to actively seek the optimal state for learning and being.

How To Explain The MindUP™ Brain

MindUP™ helps children understand how their brain works in an age-appropriate way. Practice describing either the hand model or the animal analogy with your neighbor. Additionally, using the analogy examples below, create your own analogy for the functions of the different parts of the MindUP™ brain:



MindUP™ Brain Part:

Amygdala
PFC
Hippocampus
RAS



Animal Analogy:

Guard Dog
Wise Old Owl
Hippo
Whale



School Analogy:

Fire Alarm
Teacher
Library
School Secretary



Football Analogy:

Offensive Lineman
Quarterback
Offensive Coach
Center

MindUP™ For Parents

Scenarios	Keeping the Brain in Mind	A MindUP™ Parent Response
A four year old is on the floor at the grocery store screaming	This child may be hijacked by his emotional brain (amygdala) and not able to reason in the moment (using his PFC).	Say something like “I can hear and see that you’re really upset right now, your guard dog is on alert. Let’s take a break. Let’s go outside and find a quiet place so we can calm the guard dog down.”
An eight year old child is so anxious she often can’t remember seemingly simple details	These two things could be related. When the emotional brain (amygdala) is in overdrive we don’t store information well (hippocampus).	Say something like “I’ve noticed that sometimes when you feel really worried your hippocampus isn’t working as well, and you forget some things. I think we need to try to calm your guard dog down so your hippocampus can do its job and help you to remember to bring your lunch to school.”
A teenager can’t sleep the night before a speech she has to give in English class	The teen may be hijacked by her emotional brain (amygdala) and may need help calming down fears and insecurities to better be able to access her reasoning mind (PFC) and positive memories.	Listen to and empathize with her fears and feelings. Help to remind her that her guard dog is on alert, and see what she wants to do to calm it down. Perhaps you can practice mindfully breathing together in bed. What would the wise owl say?

MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Ages 4-6: Conquering the Amygdala Hijack- Feeling Factory

- Help young children identify what they are feeling and how to describe it. Very often, behavior difficulties (amygdala hijacks) are a result of a young child not having the words to describe what they are feeling and being overwhelmed.
- Practice by acting out faces and guessing each other's feelings so that when the situation is charged with emotion, identifying feelings seems more familiar.
- Move beyond happy, sad and mad. Try frustrated, embarrassed, overwhelmed, jealous, cranky, silly, loving, excited, surprised, and joyful.

Ages 7-10: Conquering the Amygdala Hijack- Settle Your Glitter

- Take a small jar with a screw on lid and fill it almost to the top with water. Add 1 tablespoon of glitter glue. Add another tablespoon or two of fine glitter. Screw the lid on tight and shake!
- Talk with your child about how the jar is like your brain. Notice how hard it is to see clearly when the glitter is spinning. Compare it to when her amygdala is in charge and it's hard to think clearly and make good decisions. When the glitter has settled, compare it to what it's like when her amygdala is calm and she can access her pre-frontal cortex to make good decisions.

Ages 11-14: Conquering the Amygdala Hijack

- Have your teenager get familiar with the things they can do to counter the flood of emotion that is so common during this developmental period. Talk about it when he is feeling calm and centered in his pre-frontal cortex.

Some ideas that might surface, include:

- Exercise
- Journaling
- Being outside
- Spending time with certain friends or relatives . . .



Further Reading and Resources

Learn More . . .

The brain never loses its potential to develop and make more neural pathways through new experiences.

The key to thriving is to have the distinct parts of your brain working well together in an integrated manner.

How we parent can encourage our kids' brains to seek challenges or to avoid them.

Great brain books for kids
Ages 4-6

Great brain books for kids
Ages 7-10

Great brain book for teens
Ages 11-14

Good Books . . .

Smart Parenting, Smarter Kids
By David Walsh, Ph.D.

The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind
By Dan Siegel, M.D.

Mindset: The New Psychology of Success
By Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D.

A Walk in the Rain with a Brain
By Edward M. Hallowell, MD

Think, Think, Think
By Pamela Nettleton and Becky Shipe

Your Fantastic Elastic Brain
By JoAnn Deak, Ph.D.

How Does Your Brain Work?
By Don Curry

The Teen Brain Book: Who and What Are You?
By Dale Carlson

PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 2: The “Core Practice”

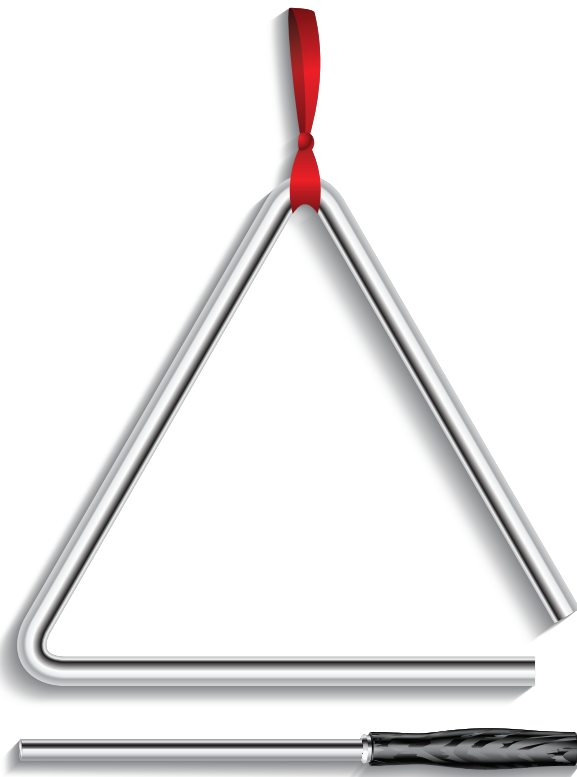
Mindful awareness through focused attention is a valuable skill for both children and caregivers to learn and master. Children and adults who learn that mindful breathing helps to calm them down, which in turn allows them to think more clearly and act in a reflective manner, will be better able to regulate their emotions, reduce stress, and make better decisions. **We highly recommend the MindUP™ Core Practice be done three times each day.**

The MindUP™ “Core Practice”

Learn how to take a “brain break”! Now let’s practice together the simple steps of the MindUP™ core practice:

- 1) Sit up tall, eyes down turned or closed
- 2) Listen for the chime (if using one)
- 3) Inhale through your nose and out your mouth
- 4) Fill the lungs fully, extending the breath to your abdomen.
- 5) Focus your attention on your breath (this could be as little as 3 breaths!)
- 6) Notice thoughts, return your attention to your breath
- 7) Listen for the chime a second time, and follow the resonant sound as long as you can

Reduce stress, calm the amygdala, access the PFC, and increase focus!



MindUP™ For Parents

Parent Personal Reflection

After the workshop, take a few quiet and focused minutes to reflect and thoughtfully respond to the following:

- When are the best times during the day for my own “brain break”?
- When are the best times during the day for me to help my children with the core practice?
- How am I most comfortable teaching the core practice?
- What other ways can I help increase my child’s awareness of his or her breath?



MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Ages 4-6: Teaching about the breath

- Have your child lie down on the floor and put a beanbag or stuffed animal on her stomach. Instruct her to quietly watch the object rise and fall with her breath.
- Blow bubbles together and watch them float to the ground.
- Use pinwheels to practice using your breath to make them go slow and fast.

Ages 7-10: Teaching about the breath

- Parents can use the “smell the flowers, blow out the candle” image to help children develop the skill of focusing attention through breathing.
- Use a focusing tool like a glitter wand or liquid timer to help him practice mindful breathing.

Ages 11-14: Teaching about the breath

- Do the “cotton ball activity” together. Each person has a cotton ball, and has to practice 1) blowing it past an object, 2) blowing it to hit a target, and then 3) practicing a gentle breath to push the cotton ball from the middle of the palm of the hand, to the fingertips without it falling.
- Teach your teen to be aware of his breath while playing sports, taking a hike, or participating in a yoga class. Is he able to slow his breath when it quickens? Is he able to focus his breath to enhance his performance?



Further Reading and Resources

Learn More . . .	Good Books . . .
You can train your brain to be fully present and mindfully aware.	The Emotional Life of Your Brain: How It's Unique Patterns Affect the Way You Think, Feel and Live -- and How You Can Change Them <i>By Richard J. Davidson</i>
Mindful awareness and attunement stimulates emotional circuits in the brain leading to an improved parent-child relationship.	Parenting from the Inside Out <i>By Dan Siegel and Mary Hartzell</i>
Great brain books for kids Ages 4-6	A Quiet Place <i>By Douglas Wood</i> Peaceful Piggy Meditation <i>By Kerry Lee and Kerry MacLean</i>
Great brain books for kids Ages 7-10	Cool Cats, Calm Kids: Relaxation and Stress Management for Young People <i>By Mary Williams</i> Breathe In, Breathe Out: Learning about your Lungs <i>By Pamela Hill Nettleton</i>
Great brain book for teens Ages 11-14	The Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens: Mindfulness Skills to Help You Deal with Stress <i>By Gina Biegel</i>

PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 3: Practicing Mindful Listening



What does it mean to awaken to our senses? It means to slow down enough to fully notice the world using our senses: seeing, listening, smelling, tasting and touching. Tuning into our senses, when practiced overtime, helps us to live in a more conscious state of mindful awareness and focused attention. This leads us to feel happier, healthier, less rushed and more engaged. To put it simply, our senses can be a practical short cut to mindful awareness. The MindUP™ mindful sensing activities include several techniques associated with increasing the dopamine levels in the brain. When dopamine levels increase, behaviors that become more prevalent include pleasure, motivation, self-awareness, alert awareness, focused attention, perseverance, memory, and emotional resilience.

Practicing Mindful Listening

For this Mindful Listening activity:

- Break into small table groups and designate one person to read the directions for this activity.
- Read and follow the instructions outlined in the Mindful Listening Directions below.
- Use the “Mystery Sound/Scent” chart (pg. 15) to record your individual experiences.
- Once you complete the activity think of ways you could introduce this activity to your children.
- Can you think of other Mindful Listening activities?

Mindful Listening Directions

1. Shake each container one at a time, and then pass around in a circle to each participant.
2. Try to identify each sound by listening mindfully with your eyes closed.
3. Write the name of what you think each sound is on your “Mystery Sound/Scent” chart (pg. 15).
4. Reveal one at a time the contents of each container to identify each sound.
5. Discuss with your neighbor how this type of listening was different from the way we usually listen. How were you able or not able to stay focused on individual sounds?
6. Which important part of your brain was working and helpful during this activity?

Mindful Listening

Help children understand that they can choose what they listen to and focus on (even when there are many sounds competing for their attention) will help them manage their behavior, mood and social relationships. Practice it anywhere; the benefits will translate into other settings. “Did you hear the wind whistling through the trees?”

MindUP™ For Parents

As a MindUP™ parent, once a day:

Resist the urge to immediately answer a question from your child. Really listen to both the informational and emotional content of the question. Savor time to reflect and develop a thoughtful response!

MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Mindful Listening Fun—All Ages

- Make your own “shakers” using opaque containers and fill them with different mystery sounds.
- Sit quietly in a room or outside. Take turns naming different and new sounds you can hear.
- Play the “telephone” game with a group. Make the phrases to repeat an appropriate challenge for the age group.
- For older children, instruct them to mindfully breathe while “singing” their favorite song silently in their head.
- Listen to a song together and identify as many different instruments and voices as you can.

Mystery Sound or Scent

Listen to the mystery sound or smell the mystery scent. List some sensory details you notice and jot down any thing or person that sound or scent reminds you of. Now make a guess. Were you right? Fill in the name of the actual sound for scent when it is revealed.

Details I Notice	What it reminds me of	My Guess	Actual Sound or Scent
1)			
2)			

PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 3: Practice at Home! Mindful Seeing



Practicing Mindful Seeing

For this Mindful Seeing activity:

- Read and follow the instructions outlined in the Mindful Seeing Directions.
- Be aware of your individual experiences.
- Once you complete this activity think of ways you could introduce it to your children.
- Can you think of other Mindful Seeing activities?

Mindful Seeing Directions

Water and Food Coloring activity

- Put 2-4 drops of food coloring into a large vase filled with water.
- Periodically add another few drops of a different color and notice what happens.
- Watch the color as it moves and changes.
- Be aware of your individual experiences.
- How does this type of seeing was different from the way we usually see. How were you able or not able to stay focused on what you were seeing?
- Which important part of your brain needs to be calm in order to mindfully see?

Mindful Seeing

Training your child to observe visual details requires coming from a posture of curiosity and the discipline of really looking at something you think you've already seen. Regardless of how familiar we are with something, there is always more to see. "I've never noticed how bright the colors in that plate are. Have you?"

MindUP™ For Parents

As a MindUP™ parent, once a day:

Stop and really see where you are, noting details, and how you are feeling at that moment.

Take a minute to stop and really see and observe your child at play or at work. Notice any details about his or her behaviors and expressions. Notice how you are feeling at that moment.

MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Mindful Seeing Fun—All Ages

- Play “I Spy” – make the challenge of the object to find developmentally appropriate.
- Look at a picture or a piece of art. Make a list of what you notice, color, lines, and details, what feelings you have.
- Find a welcoming spot in your home. Take one minute to mindfully look at it. Turn away from the spot so you can no longer see it and for the next minute list as many details as you can remember about that spot.
- Make a family walk a lot more fun for a young child by going on a “Treasure Hunt.” Encouraging her to look for treasures. These can be special leaves, rocks etc.
- For older kids, in pairs, face each other and mindfully notice what your partner looks like. Turn around so your backs are to each other, and then each person should change one thing about their appearance (pull up a sleeve, take one earring out, etc). When ready, turn back around to face each other. Whoever can correctly guess the change in their partner first wins.



PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 3: Practice at Home! Mindful Smelling

Practicing Mindful Smelling

For this Mindful Seeing activity:

- Read and follow the instructions outlined in the Mindful Seeing Directions.
- Be aware of your individual experiences.
- Once you complete this activity think of ways you could introduce it to your children.
- Can you think of other Mindful Seeing activities?

Mindful Smelling Directions

1. Collect three small jars and three cotton balls. Moisten each cotton ball with a different scent (essential oils, baking oils, other every day liquid scents, etc). Place each cotton ball in a different jar.
2. Try to identify each scent by smelling mindfully with your eyes closed.
3. Notice any thoughts or memories that surface while mindfully smelling.
4. Write the name of what you think each scent is on your “Mystery Sound/Scent” sheet (pg. 7).
5. Discuss with your family how this type of smelling is different from the way we usually smell and react. How were you able or not able to stay focused on individual scents?
6. Which important part of your brain is responsible for the recollection of memories associated with the different scents?

Mindful Smelling

The sense of smell is strongly linked with memory—the memory and smell centers in the brain are located near each other. In addition, different smells impact mood and energy level. Some stuffed animals are now coming with lavender in them to calm a child or help her sleep. How can you use a calming scent to help soothe your child?

MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Mindful Seeing Fun—All Ages

- Make your own “mystery scents” using opaque containers and fill them cotton balls soaked with different scents- get creative with common household scents (check the fridge or the cupboard).
- List with your child the smells of each season.
- Discuss together 3-5 of your favorite scents and share the memories associated with each scent.
- Take a mindful smelling walk together. Choose a walking-friendly street in your town or city that has a variety of restaurants and shops. Stop and notice each new smell along the way. How does the bakery smell differently from the ice cream shop or the nearby park? How many different scents can you identify?

MindUP™ For Parents

As a MindUP™ parent, once a day:

Take a moment to appreciate the smell of your food at breakfast or lunch before eating it.

Teach your child to do the same.



PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 3: Practice at Home! Mindful Tasting



Practicing Mindful Tasting

For this Mindful Tasting activity:

- As a family, practice mindfully tasting a morsel of food.
- Choose a type of simple food that will appeal to everyone (like a grape, a cracker, or a carrot).
- First, put the morsel of food in the palm of your hand and mindfully see it. Next, mindfully smell the morsel. Then, put the morsel of food into your mouth- but DON'T bite down yet! What do you notice as you hold the morsel on your tongue? Begin to slowly chew your morsel, what is the taste, texture, temperature? Finally, swallow and feel the morsel go all the way down your throat.
- Once you complete this activity think of ways you could introduce it to your children.
- Can you think of other Mindful Tasting activities?

Mindful Tasting

Taking time to savor our food and appreciate the flavors, the textures and the temperature is a pleasure that is available to us every day but rarely enjoyed. Eating mindfully has implications for our health and well-being. With obesity on the rise, examining our eating habits can act as a protective factor. "Wow, this carrot is so crunchy and sweet!"

MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Mindful Seeing Fun—All Ages

- Conduct a blind taste test of each food on your child's plate at dinner.
- Teach your child to savor a morsel of food and describe the experience. Ask her how it felt in her mouth, what sensations did she notice in her body, what memory did it trigger?
- Choose one day a week where your child (with more help depending on their age) is in charge of making dinner. Help them plan their menu and prepare. Throughout the process, draw their attention to the sensory rich moments. Mindfully taste together a morsel of each food they prepare.
- Help your child to create a menu they would enjoy eating mindfully. Include beverages and desert. Have them describe flavors and textures that would make this meal worth savoring.

MindUP™ For Parents

As a MindUP™ parent, once a day:

At lunch, take ten minutes to really taste (and digest) your food. No multitasking! You'll feel more satisfied, more able to focus, and more prepared to effectively manage your day.

Further Reading and Resources

Learn More . . .

Intentional awareness of the senses allows us to live more fully and more authentically.

For some children, the central nervous system misinterprets messages from their senses.

Exercise is truly the best defense against everything from mood disorders to ADHD to addiction to menopause to Alzheimer's.

Learn more about giving our children and our selves the social and emotional skills to reduce stress and anxiety for healthier, happier lives.

Good Books . . .

Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World through Mindfulness

By Jon Kabat Zinn

The Out-of-Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Processing Disorder and The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun (Activity based)

By Carol Kranowitz

Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain

By John J. Ratey, M.D.

10 Mindful Minutes

By GoldieAWN

PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 4: Practice at Home! Mindful Movement



Practicing Mindful Movement

For this Mindful Movement activity:

- As a whole group we will be practicing mindfully moving.
- The activity is called “mirror movement.”
- As if you were looking into a mirror, follow the movements of the presenter as best you can.
- Notice the sensations of your body, and see if you can focus your attention on the movement.
- Once completed, think of ways you could incorporate mindful movement into your daily life as a family. How could you use this activity with your children?

Mindful Movement

There are few things in the world that are beyond dispute. One is that exercise and moving our bodies is valuable for all of us. The physical benefits have been chronicled for many years: lower blood pressure, less risk of type 2 diabetes, healthier hearts, etc. Newer on the horizon is a body of research that confirms a significant link between physical exercise and positive academic, mental health and social outcomes. No matter what it looks like for your family, how can you “move a body” every day?

MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Mindful Seeing Fun—All Ages

- Play “Jenga” as a family. Take turns mindfully moving the blocks.
- Teach your child to balance a beanbag on his head and raise a knee to create a balancing position. Remain for 60 seconds, breathing deeply, and notice the sensations in the body.
- Do a “Dopamine Dance”- put on music that makes you all happy and enjoy wiggling, turning, shaking your bodies, and dancing together.
- Wii Fit- If you have this technology make sure to try the yoga, bowling, running and tennis games.
- Vintage outdoor fun- bring it back! Teach your children kick-the-can, freeze tag, hide and seek, capture the flag, Frisbee, red light green light, etc.

MindUP™ For Parents

As a MindUP™ parent, once a day:

Take short breaks with your children to move...a wiggle moment, or shaking out, or jumping jacks. This wakes up the brain, releases positive neurotransmitters, and generally functions as a reset button.

Further Reading and Resources

Learn More . . .

Great senses-based books for kids:
Ages 4-6

Great senses-based books for kids:
Ages 7-10

Great senses-based books for teens:
Ages 11-14

Good Books . . .

Senses in the City

By Shelly Rotner

Sleepy Little Yoga

By Rebecca Whitford

“Slowly, Slowly, Slowly,” said the Sloth

By Eric Carle

Magic School Bus Explores the Senses

By Joanna Cole and Bruce Degen

The Monster Health Book: A Guide to Eating Healthy, Being Active & Feeling Great for Monsters & Kids!

By Edward Miller

Can You Hear It?

By William Lach

(The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Eat Fresh Food: Awesome Recipes for Teen Chefs

By Rozanne Gold

Breath: Yoga for Teens

By Mary Kaye Chrysticas

PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 5: Perspective Taking



We are social beings and our brain is a social brain. As parents, we know that our children must be able to connect with others, feel empathy and understand the perspectives of their peers in order to have a fulfilling life. What we now know from science is that in order to do this, they must first be able to self-reflect and understand their own thoughts, feelings, experiences and impact on others. We can help our children develop perspective taking and empathy, while increasing our own perspective taking skills. Like any skill it requires modeling, practice and feedback.

Perspective Taking

Remember the story of the “Big Bad Wolf?” Put yourself into the perspective of the Big Bad Wolf character.

- Think of a time you were seen as the “Big Bad Wolf”
- Why did others see you as the “Wolf?”
- How did you see yourself at the same time?
- Write your reflections below:

MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Ages 4-6: Teaching perspective taking

- “Who Are You Hats!”- Bring several hats to a dress up area and encourage young children to imagine the character that might wear the hat. What would their voice sound like? What would they wear? How would they do their work?

Ages 7-10: Teaching perspective taking

- Help your child take on the perspective of your household pet. Ask questions like: What do you think makes Rover happy? How do you know what kind of petting Rover likes? Why do you think he spends time in the closet when it’s thundering?

Ages 11-14: Teaching perspective taking

- “Charades”- This classic game invites you to take on the experience of someone else and convey it in an understandable way. Audience members have to take the perspective of the actor in order to guess correctly!

MindUP™ For Parents

Parent Personal Reflection

After the workshop, take a few quiet and focused minutes to reflect and thoughtfully respond to the following:

- Write about the areas of your life where you are MOST open to other viewpoints and LEAST open?
- How open was your childhood home to differences? What effect did that have on you? What effect does that have on how you parent?
- Describe the types of relationships you envision for your child when they are an adult. What characteristics must they develop now in order for those relationships to flourish? What must you do to facilitate the nurturing of those characteristics?



PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 5: Practice at Home! Choosing Optimism

We all come into this world leaning toward glass half full or glass half empty. While that set point is very real, research shows genetics account for only about 25% of our optimistic tendencies. There are concrete things we can do to shift to a more optimistic outlook, and parents play a key part in making this happen. Children who see the world optimistically experience life as hopeful and full of possibilities.

Choosing Optimism

Optimism, Pessimism, and Unrealistic Thinking are three different things! On your own, at home, write out a definition of each. Next, consider the following scenario:

Scenario: The whole family has been really looking forward to a bike ride on Saturday, but when Saturday comes it is violently raining and blowing wind.

Respond to the following scenario in the different ways: optimistically, pessimistically, and with unrealistic thinking:

MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Ages 4-6: Teaching perspective taking

- “Optimistic I Spy” - Have your child pick out his favorite picture book. Play this new “I Spy” game by saying things like: “I Spy something that makes me happy,” “I Spy something I can do,” and “I Spy someone who tried hard.”

Ages 7-10: Teaching perspective taking

- “Positive Pennies” - Around the dinner table or at bedtime, reflect on the day’s experiences. Help your child think about times when she responded with an optimistic attitude. For each response, have her add a penny to the Positive Penny Jar. When the jar is full, take a field trip together to a favorite charity followed by a trip to the ice cream store.

Ages 11-14: Teaching perspective taking

- “Flash Forward” - Consider your most optimistic future. In one, five or ten years, what will you be doing? What will I be doing? Let your child see you dream big about your own future too. Next, create a visual of the dream (poster, drawing, shoe box, vision board). Post it somewhere and keep the conversation alive. Tie it to daily choices. Is this taking us closer to our preferred future or away from it?

MindUP™ For Parents

As a MindUP™ parent, once a day:

When something does not go your way, think of it as an opportunity to model optimistic thinking. Verbalize what you are thinking and how it is affecting you. Do it again and again.

For example, next time you are in traffic and going to be late, move from:

I always get caught in the wrong lane, we are never going to get there and I'll probably get fired.

to...

The traffic is crazy today! Oh well, we'll get there when we get there and it will all work out. Let's practice your times tables while we wait.



PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 6: Appreciating Happy Experiences

“Focusing on happiness is not a frivolous pursuit; it is one of the emotions that can inform the trajectory of our lives.” – Goldie Hawn, 10 Mindful Minutes

We actually have the ability to train our brains to actively savor happy experiences in order to reap the benefits. Focusing on the positive is not just a “sentimental idea” but is actually grounded in current neuroscience. Our brains release dopamine (a feel good neurotransmitter) when we remember a happy moment in the same way as if we were actually experiencing it. Nurturing this practice overtime actually changes the way our brains are wired and impacts how we feel, think, and behave.

Savoring Happiness

Let’s make our own individual Happy Memory Mini-Movies! Together, we are going to savor a personal happy memory, and “see” it behind closed eyes like we would a movie.

- Bring all your attention to your happy experience/memory
- Start the mini-movie in your mind
- See the people involved, notice the things that make you happy. Notice your thoughts and how your body is feeling
- Picture the way your happy memory ends, and focus on how it makes you feel

MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Ages 4-6: Teaching perspective taking

- “ABC Glee”- Help your child create a book where every page is filled with things that make him happy which start with the respective letter. Use pictures from magazines, take photographs, or allow him to create his own drawings.

Ages 7-10: Teaching perspective taking

- “Happy Haikus”- The Haiku is a very short form of Japanese poetry that consists of 17 syllables in three lines. Typically 5,7,5. Write Happy Haikus together, collecting them in a book.

Ice Skating with friends
Snow Gently Falls Around Us
Soon Hot Chocolate!

Ages 11-14: Teaching perspective taking

- “Top Five”- Help your child begin actively identifying what they need to do to feel good and happy. Have them identify the top five things that turn their mood around. It’s a lifelong gift for them to understand that it’s within their reach to turn the tide in regard to their feelings. Some popular choices for the top five include: drawing, running, yoga, music, talking to friends, dancing.

MindUP™ For Parents

As a MindUP™ Family:

Create a Family Happy Memories book. When you have a fun or positive experience together, take a picture and paste it in the book. Take turns writing about the experience underneath the picture. Revisit the book often, looking through the pictures and captions, mindfully remembering the happy experiences together.



PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 6: Practice at Home! Performing Acts of Kindness

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Performing Acts of Kindness

The most powerful thing you can do is model kindness to yourself, your family and others. If you have moments of unkind reactions, pay attention, ask yourself what’s going on and then get back on track by making a repair. Your kids will learn from your example.

Language is powerful. Set an intention to use kind words throughout the day (especially in ear shot of your children) such as: generous, helpful, warm, loving, gentle, understanding, respectful, nurturing, friendly.

MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Ages 4-6: Teaching perspective taking

- “Magic Kindness Wand”- Create a special magic wand from a stick, straw or toy, that your young child can use to spread kindness. When he touches a family member with the wand, the family member must say something kind or have a suggestion of how he could extend a kindness to someone else.

Ages 7-10: Teaching perspective taking

- “BFF PowerPoint”- If your child’s friend is sick and misses school, encourage her to put together a creative get-well card using PowerPoint. She can search for uplifting pictures and quotes and then deliver by email.

Ages 11-14: Teaching perspective taking

- “Boom Boom” - Be kind! Track it online. Use the Boom Boom app which allows your teen to upload random acts of kindness that you witness or experience. Let kindness go viral!
<http://boomboomcards.com/>

MindUP™ For Parents

As a MindUP™ Parent:

Notice specific incidents where kids act in kind, pro-social ways and make comments that reinforce their kind acts as character traits. Avoid bribing your kids to do the right thing. Research has shown that extrinsic rewards actually discourage children from spontaneously acting in kind ways. Give them opportunities to feel the intrinsic pay off for being kind.



PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 6: Practice at Home! Taking Mindful Action in the World

When parents are asked what they want for their children, a common answer is “I want them to be happy and I want them to contribute to their community.” Mindful awareness, compassion, optimism and gratitude come to maturity when we integrate these qualities and take mindful action in the world. Volunteering as a family helps kids see themselves as activators and change agents. That pro-active, problem-solving posture can show up in all areas of life going forward. Service-oriented families are more compassionate, less isolated, more tolerant, less egocentric and feel more connected to their communities.

Taking Mindful Action in the World

Brainstorm as a family ways you can make a powerful impact for good for another family, a school, your neighborhood, your community, or even across the world. In order to make your family volunteer experience successful, ask yourselves the following:

1. Who are we helping and why?
2. What tasks will we be doing?
3. How much time will we spend?
4. What will we do afterwards (family connection and reflection)?

MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Ages 4-6: Teaching perspective taking

- “Walk the Block” - Walk around the neighborhood and challenge your young child to look for opportunities to be a good citizen by picking up trash, helping a lost dog, etc.

Ages 7-10: Teaching perspective taking

- “BFF PowerPoint” - If your child’s friend is sick and misses school, encourage her to put together a “It’s My Park, too!” - Help your child feel a sense of ownership of favorite public places. The next time you are at your usual park, take some supplies to pick up litter and find new ways to leave the space better than how you found it.

Ages 11-14: Teaching perspective taking

- Join the group dosomething.org. They believe in the power of teens to create social change. They have an online presence that will give your teen ideas, a platform and lots of reinforcement that doing good is COOL!

MindUP™ For Parents

Parent Personal Reflection

After the workshop, take a few quiet and focused minutes to reflect and thoughtfully respond to the following:

- How do I want my child to see his role in making the world a better place? What do I need to do now to encourage him toward that vision?
- Reflect on a time you or a family member were in need and were the recipient of someone else's kindness.
- Reflect upon what drives you to do good for others. What are some guiding beliefs? What are problematic beliefs that might complicate the good you are trying to do?



PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 6: Expressing Gratitude

Simply focusing for a minute on the experiences in our lives we're grateful for shifts our thinking to a calmer, more content perspective, which can immediately uplift and comfort us. When we make expression of gratitude as a family a regular practice, we train our brains to shift to a positive mindset more efficiently and maintain a healthier, more optimistic perspective. Sharing gratitude as a family helps to forge stronger bonds, greater trust, and increases empathy.

Expressing Gratitude

As a group, we'll all stand together in a "Gratitude Circle."

- When you receive the "gratitude stone," name one thing you are grateful for today, and then pass the stone to the next person.
- Give the speaker your full attention and listen mindfully, without commenting on what that person says.
- Our goal is to make everyone feel comfortable about sharing.
- You may choose not to share out loud, hold the stone in your hand, think your thought of gratitude, and pass the stone along.

MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Ages 4-6: Teaching perspective taking

- "Gratitude Chain"- Cut strips of colorful paper and place them in a basket or baggie. Start a gratitude chain where each person in the family writes down something they are grateful for. Loop the strips together and watch your gratitude chain grow.

Ages 7-10: Teaching perspective taking

- "Gratitude Letter"- Invite your child to write a letter to an important person in his life and express gratitude for the influence and/or happiness this person brings. Encourage your child to be specific about the (non-material) gifts he sees in this person. The impact of this activity will be even greater if your child hand delivers this special letter!

Ages 11-14: Teaching perspective taking

- "Social Media Gratitude Fever"- Encourage your teen to post something on Facebook that she is grateful for everyday. Watch how her positive attitude rises above some of the more gossipy posting. See if her friends catch the gratitude fever.

Parent Workbook Activity 6 :

MindUP™ For Parents

As a MindUP™ Family:

Practice your own gratitude circles. Have each family member choose his or her own gratitude stone (maybe even decorate them together). While at dinner, pull out the gratitude stones and take time to share what each member is grateful for that day.

Parent Workbook Activity 6 :

Further Reading and Resources

Learn More . . .

In order to fully engage in our relationships, we have to be able to integrate self-awareness and empathy.

Biologically, we are social beings.

Great perspective taking and optimism books for kids
Ages 4-6

Great perspective taking and optimism books for kids
Ages 7-10

Great perspective taking and optimism books for teens
Ages 11-14

People who practice gratitude feel 25% happier and are more likely to be kind and helpful to others.

Good Books . . .

The Whole Brain Child

By Dan Siegel

Neural Correlates of Admiration and Compassion

By Mary Helen Immordino Yang, Andrea McColl, Hanna Damasio and Antonio Damasio

Hey Little Ant

By Phillip M. Hoose, Hannah Hoose and Debby Tilley

Little Liam Eagle - *By Nancy McGrath*

The True Story of the Three Little Pigs

By Jon Scieszka

What to Do When You Grumble Too Much: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Negativity - *By Dawn Hubener*

son Madela: No Easy Walk to Freedom

By Barry Denenberg

Who Moved My Cheese for Teens

By Spencer Johnson, M.D.

Thanks!: How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier - *By Robert Emmons*



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