

## Mindful Breathing

Mindful breathing can be used to de-stress your life.

- Turn off the lights and technology. Lie on the ground or sit in a comfortable position with your children.
- Encourage your children to focus on their breath. Remind them to let their thoughts pass like clouds in the sky.
- Discuss some of the body sensations and emotions they felt while their bodies were still and calm.
- This is easy to practice before meals.

Extensions: Help your children express where in their body and how they are feeling angry, happy, sad, shy, or embarrassed. I feel hot, my ears are hot, my hands are sweaty, as examples

Explain that recognizing and talking through difficult emotions is a healthy practice and can lead to a better understanding of others and oneself. Practice The Ms. Backus 5 finger breathing (see below) or 4x4.

## Stay Attuned and Model

Adults run on automatic. Taking a moment to pause can bring calm, purpose, and connection. Teaching your children about the importance of taking a moment to pause can support them in reacting to others with intention instead of their immediate emotional reactions (for example, thinking before you say something mean to a loved one, reducing sarcastic remarks to friends when uncomfortable, bragging when feeling left out)

- Practice taking a moment of silence as a whole family before you drop your children off at school, after a family disagreement, mealtimes or before responding to a difficult question your child asks. Simply say, "Let's pause and Take A Break"
- Everyone should close their eyes and breathe in deeply. Exhale. Repeat (4x4, 5 fingers)
- Encourage your children to take a moment to pause if they are upset about an argument with a friend, a really difficult assignment,

grade, or a disagreement with a family member, teammate, or teacher.

## Practice Gratitude During Difficult Times

This activity will help your child create positive self-talk instead of the negative.

- During a difficult situation (such as your child having a really hard time completing an assignment from school and is upset about it), explain to your child that you are both going to take a break, step back, and think about the situation.
- Take a few breaths together and repeat the phrase, "I am grateful for many things."
- Ask your child to think of something they are grateful for. Encourage them to share it aloud with you or write it down on a piece of paper. Save it for the Jar
- Share something you are grateful for with your child.
- Continue this process until a lighter feeling replaces the tension.
- Explain to your child that although the situation might feel frustrating right now, it's important to put the challenge into perspective.
- Help them look at the frustration again and help them problem-solve for a solution.
- Remind your child that many good things are also happening, and she or he can get through the challenge.

### Extensions:

Extend your child's understanding of gratitude by completing the Gratitude basket or jar. Each day, each member of the family can write something they are grateful for on a strip of paper and place in the jar or basket. During difficult times, study breaks, or when feeling low, reading the jar notes will be uplifting. You can also pick a strip or jar note each morning to begin your day with gratefulness.

Try one mindfulness practice per week as a family, parents, and children can practice daily on their own. Try to see what helps each member the best.

