



## Tips for Doing Lions Quest Mindfulness Exercises with Young Children

At this stage of life, young children are going through one of the most rapid periods of growth and development, physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally. They want to explore what's going on inside of them and how they feel. Language skills are increasing as they learn to express their feelings verbally. Therefore, the focus of mindfulness exercises at this age is on the development of deep breathing as well as focusing attention on, expressing, and managing feelings.

*Mindfulness exercises may be beneficial to practice as a family as well as one-on-one with your child.*

Following are simple tips for engaging your child with mindfulness exercises:

**TRY OUT THE EXERCISES FOR YOURSELF.** It's always best to do the exercises yourself before sharing them with your child so that you are comfortable and familiar with them. You may find that by participating with your child, you are becoming a more patient and responsive parent. Notice how your calm behavior supports the social, emotional, and academic learning needs of your child. Mindfulness is for adults, too!

**INTRODUCE MINDFULNESS AS A FUN ACTIVITY.** Young children are usually eager to try something new. Tell your child that you are going to do something fun together that will help you both feel more peaceful and ready for a good day. After experiencing a mindfulness exercise, your child will likely look forward to more because the exercises are enjoyable and make them feel safe and calm.

**PARTICIPATE WITH YOUR CHILD.** Let your child know that you will be participating in these exercises with them. Children are much more likely to do these exercises if you share in the experience.

**FIND A QUIET AND COMFORTABLE SPACE.** Find a place with enough space and no distractions. A quiet space is ideal, as it supports turning the attention inside. Some people like to dim the lights. Turn off all media unless you choose to play soft instrumental music in the background.

**BEGIN WITH A MINDFUL POSTURE.** Get into a mindful posture, which is generally a comfortable seated position, either in a chair or cross-legged on the floor. Sit up straight with hands on the thighs. Let your child choose whether to close the eyes or gaze softly toward the floor. You and your child may choose to do an occasional exercise lying down or standing to mix it up.

**CREATE A DAILY HABIT.** Young children love routine. Doing a simple mindfulness exercise at the same time every day helps to create a powerful daily habit. Consider doing mindfulness exercises after breakfast or before bed.

