



Introduction to Mindful Breathing

Mindful breathing is the foundation of mindfulness practices. This brief exercise will acquaint you and your child with this simple practice that you will be using with each mindfulness exercise going forward.

- Each exercise takes 10 minutes or less.
- Familiarize yourself with the exercise before using with your child.
- Use the script to guide the exercise. Adjust language as needed.
- All exercises begin with **Breath Awareness** followed by a **Mindfulness Activity** that teaches a practical mindfulness skill.
- Each exercise ends with **Reflecting Questions** to discuss with your child. Invite your child to stay in mindful silence until the Reflecting Questions.

Breath Awareness

Let's do something fun together that will help us feel really peaceful and ready to have a good day. Will you do this with me?

Let's start out by getting quiet and comfortable. The first thing we will do is keep our bodies as still as possible. Let's try it. (pause)

Now let's get comfortable by wiggling a little bit and getting the kinks out. (pause)

Now sit up straight as if a string is pulling your head up to the sky. (pause)

Place your hands on your thighs, palms down. (pause)

Gaze softly toward the floor. Notice what it feels like to sit quietly for a moment and just breathe. (pause)

Now place your hands on your belly and notice what is happening. (pause)

Your belly is rising when you breathe in and falling when you breathe out. Isn't that amazing? This is happening all day long, and we don't even think about it! Let's try a few more of these belly breaths. Notice your belly rising and falling under your hands. (pause)

Now imagine that your belly is a balloon. When you take your next breath, notice that your belly is getting bigger like a balloon as you fill it up with air and smaller as you let the air out. Can you be like a balloon a few more times? Fill your balloon belly again and feel the belly rise under your hands, perhaps just a little bit more each time. Then feel the belly go all the way down as you let out the air. (pause)

Let's do this a few more times and see what starts to happen in your body. (pause)

How do you feel when you do this? (pause)





You can notice your balloon belly any time you place your hands on your belly and notice them going up and down with each breath. Cool, huh? I'm feeling safe and peaceful right now and I hope you are too. (pause)

Thanks for doing this with me.

Reflecting

Take this opportunity to have a conversation about your shared experience using the following reflecting questions:

Reflecting Questions

- What?** What did it feel like to sit quietly at first? What did it feel like to fill up your belly like a balloon when you breathed in and let it go when you breathed out?
- So What?** What happened inside your body as you kept doing this?
- Now What?** Would you like to do this again?

