



JUNIOR AND SENIOR INFANTS

Parent Support Sheets

Lesson 2: Big Feelings – Happy and Sad

Lesson Summary:

In class today, the children compared and contrasted the feelings of happiness and sadness through exploring these feelings in the story “Along Came a Cloud”. The children used music and movement to explore how our bodies feel when we are feeling happy and feeling sad. They were introduced to Teddy Breathing as a strategy for self-regulation when feeling sad.

Try It At Home Activity: “Teddy Bear Breathing”

Your child/the child in your care practised “Teddy Bear Breathing” in class today, which is a calming “mindfulness” activity you can also try with your child/the child in your care. Find a quiet spot, lie down and place a teddy on your child/the child in your care’s belly, and another teddy on your belly. Breathe in slowly through the nose, watching the teddy bear rise, and exhale through the mouth, watching the teddy bear lower. Repeat a few times together. This simple technique helps children manage their feelings and relax when they need a moment of calm. Children were also encouraged to colour in their teddy.

Dr. Malie and Linsey’s Top Tips:

“Teddy Bear Breathing” is a lovely example of “**mindful breathing**” or “**mindfulness**”, which is an invaluable skill we can teach children from three years of age, which helps them to relax, clear their minds and cope with difficult situations, thoughts and feelings.

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the present moment, on purpose and without judgement. The beauty of mindfulness is that it **allows children to increase awareness** of their full range of experience, including their thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations, without becoming overwhelmed by them. When children learn to be more “present” in the moment, they can **pay better attention and make wiser decisions**.

Mindfulness helps children to **manage their difficult feelings** like fear, sadness and anger, and **improves their self-esteem and overall wellbeing**. It helps children to connect with themselves, increasing confidence, self-awareness and well-being.

In this modern-day, busy age, mindfulness is a **crucial life skill for us all**, and the earlier we introduce it to children, the more prepared they will be to grow into emotionally healthy adults. To top all that off, mindfulness is **free, can be done almost anywhere** and, once learned, can become an invaluable tool for life!

When we teach mindfulness to children, **it helps to engage all their senses** and to turn it into a fun activity, encouraging them to use their sense of smell, touch and visualisation.

We love “**Pizza breathing**”, it’s a great breathing activity for children, and who doesn’t love pizza! Pizza breathing involves visualising a warm, bubbly pizza with delicious toppings, and breathing in and out slowly, to help them to relax and release tension.

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“Pizza Breathing” helps the tension in our bodies slowly melt away like mozzarella cheese:

1. Ask you your child/the child in your care to start by imagining their favourite, most delicious and warm slice of pizza in front of them. Notice its colour, texture, and smell.
2. Take a deep breath in to smell your yummy pizza for a count of three. Pause and hold your breath in for three. Then a big blow out to cool it down for a count of three.
3. Repeat two to three times, breathing in the yummy smell, and blowing out to cool it down, imagining the warmth of the pizza slowly spreading throughout your body.



Resources:

- Here is a link for free “Mindful Breathing Posters” with nice exercises to try with your child/the child in your care:
<https://www.jpsny.org/cms/lib/NY50000104/Centricity/Domain/4804/MindfulnessBreathingPostersandPocketCardsCalmDownCorner.pdf>
- Your child/the child in your care will be familiar with Louise Shanagher’s voice as she recorded the “Mindful Moments” for the Schools Programme. Here is a list of her “Free Resources”:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IEJwGKWxjnzL5IAb_d3udcgLj5oITIKq/view?usp=sharing
- Louise has also kindly put together a list of “Recommended Books” for children and parents:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LvjsQ0wwVBo7YuTyNDVJuVwbRjQTGP3Q/view?usp=sharing>
- Niall Breslin has written a lovely story book series introducing mindfulness techniques to children, like The Magic Moment (Gill, 2018): <https://www.niallbreslin.com/books>
- And if you’d like a look at Niall Breslin’s “Mindful Moments for Children”:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLaSpT2jKLM16Z0i2yO1LxhEHJmSqyhaUv>
- Creative Mindfulness Practitioner Leona McDonnell has written a lovely children’s storybook:
<https://leonamcdonnell.com/lucys-mindful-life-when-lucy-meets-arden/>