

# How mindful meditation can help your child



Mindful meditation is a time of quiet contemplation that offers children and adolescents an opportunity to decompress and reflect on their physical, mental and emotional experiences.

Mindfulness helps build important life skills — focus, reflection, compassion and a sense of connection — and is especially beneficial for children with attention-deficit disorders or those prone to anxiety or anger.

## Benefits

**Mental, physical and emotional benefits include:**

- Reducing stress
- Building resiliency
- Enhancing emotional regulation
- Improving cognitive focus (e.g., when test taking)
- Encouraging deeper personal insight
- Improving general health and well-being

## Techniques and tips

If you feel your child is ready, start with one-minute daily sessions and build to five-minute sessions as they get older.

### For younger children

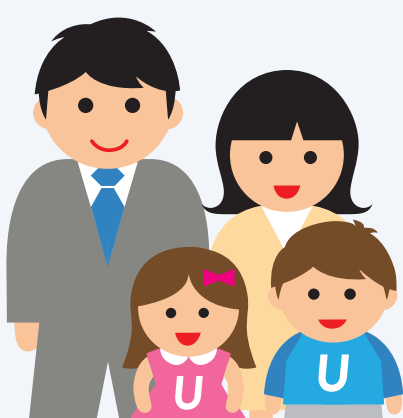
Try game-based techniques (e.g., mindfulness-based activity cards) or calming sound exercises that focus their attention on specific noises.

### Adolescents

Start with breathing exercises — count the number of breaths, inhaling through the nose and exhaling completely through the mouth. When the mind starts to wander, refocus on breathing.

## Social media and parent modeling

Children today face many distractions, especially with social media — an influential communication tool that has also been linked to feelings of anxiety and loneliness among young people. If children spend a lot of time on social media, they may become very distracted and lose the capacity to be present with themselves.



To prevent excess media use, parents should not only limit the amount of time kids spend on their phones and computers, but they should also model mindful behavior at home to show their children alternative ways of meaningful connection.

