

Coaching & Mentoring CONNECTIONS

ISSUE 4 • July 2025

Our goal is to provide you with practical, inspiring resources to support your work and professional growth in the early learning and child care field.

Welcome to the July edition of the ECCDC Coaching and Mentoring newsletter. Dr Jean Clinton (n.d.) says **“It’s important to consider the mental health of educators because they create the weather in the environment, which affects the children’s experience”** and one of the ways that educators can support their well-being is by practicing mindfulness. In this edition, we will be exploring how educators can incorporate mindfulness into their daily practice to support their well-being but also how they can utilize mindfulness experiences with children.



Spotlight on Mindfulness

In recent times we started to focus on our own well-being, as you can't pour from an empty pitcher. Mindfulness is something that many of us started practice personally, with our teams, and the children during the pandemic, and it has now become part of our daily routine. Click [here](#) to read *Mindfulness for Early Childhood Educators* (ZERO to THREE) which explores how educators can use mindfulness in their setting for themselves and the children they work with.



To see mindfulness with children in action please click [here](#).

Mindfulness in Early Childhood Education

by Sara Abbara, Brock University Student Intern with the ECCDC

Mindfulness in early childhood education refers to practices that help children develop an awareness of their thoughts, emotions, and surroundings. It encourages self-regulation, emotional well-being, and focus, supporting overall mental and social-emotional development (Jennings, 2015). Mindfulness activities, such as breathing exercises, guided imagery, and mindful movement, help children manage stress, enhance concentration, and build resilience.

Some of the benefits of children practicing mindfulness include promoting self-awareness and emotional regulation in children and supports children to focus, pay attention, and develop cognitive flexibility. When children practice mindfulness, it supports their social-emotional learning and the development of empathy and strengthens their problem-solving and resiliency. Mindfulness encourages relaxation and children's stress management skills.



Types of Mindfulness Practices in Early Learning

- **Mindful Breathing** – deep breathing exercises to calm the mind and body.
- **Guided Imagery** – visualization activities to promote relaxation and focus.
- **Body Awareness** – progressive muscle relaxation and mindful movement.
- **Sensory Awareness** – engaging in mindful observation of surroundings.
- **Gratitude Practices** – encouraging appreciation and positive thinking.
- **Mindful Storytelling** – listening to or creating stories with reflective elements.
- **Yoga and Movement** – using controlled movement to connect mind and body.

The Role of Educators in Mindfulness Practices

Educators can facilitate mindfulness in their programs through the creation of calm and nurturing early learning and child care environments and integrating short mindfulness experiences into the daily routine and programing. For older children, educators can encourage them to reflect by offering open-ended prompts to support discussions about feelings. And don't forget the importance of being a role model by modeling mindful behaviours and self-regulation techniques.

Research and Theoretical Foundations

So how is incorporating mindfulness practices within early learning and child care supported by our early learning frameworks, research, and theoretical foundations? Much of our practice in early learning and child care is underpinned by the constructivist theories of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Piaget's cognitive development theory would support the practice of mindfulness as it fosters self-reflection and problem-solving skills, supporting children's transition from concrete to abstract thinking (Piaget, 1952). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory supports mindfulness practices as it support's children's social-emotional learning and peer interactions by reinforcing development within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978).



How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014) highlights mindfulness as a tool for fostering well-being, self-expression, and emotional literacy and *Early Learning for Every Child Today* (ELECT) (Best Start 2007) recognizes mindfulness as part of self-regulation and social-emotional development.

Mindfulness in Action

Activity: Mindful Breathing with a Small Stuffed Animal		
Learning Areas: Emotional Regulation, Focus, Self-Awareness		
Step 1: Set Up the Environment	Step 2: Mindful Breathing Exercise	Step 3: Reflection & Extension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide each child with a small stuffed animal • Have children lie down comfortably with the small stuffed animal on their belly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide children to inhale slowly through the nose while watching their small stuffed animal rise. • Encourage them to exhale slowly through the mouth, observing the small stuffed animal fall. • Repeat for several breaths, helping children develop awareness of their breath and relaxation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask children, "How does your body feel after breathing with your small stuffed animal?" • Encourage children to use breathing with a small stuffed animal during stressful moments • Extend the activity with mindful storytelling or a yoga pose.



For an example of using yoga to support mindfulness with children, [click here](#) (Cosmic Kids Yoga).

Books are another great way to support children with mindfulness. Check out the books and resources on the following pages, which are available to borrow from the ECCDC or may be purchased from the ECCDC e-store.

Please see (pages 7-8) for this month's Mindful Moment for Educators.

References and Resources for Mindfulness in Early Learning Books & Articles

Burke, C. A. (2010). *Mindfulness-based approaches with children and adolescents: A review of the research*. Journal of Child and Family Studies, 19(2), 133-144.

Jennings, P. A. (2015). *Mindfulness for teachers: Simple skills for peace and productivity in the classroom*. W.W. Norton & Company.

Harvard Center on the Developing Child. (n.d.). *The benefits of mindfulness for young children*.
<https://developingchild.harvard.edu>

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). *Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life*. Hyperion.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (n.d.). Mindfulness in early childhood education.
<https://www.naeyc.org>

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). *How does learning happen? Ontario's pedagogy for the early years*.

Ontario Ministry of Education (2007). *Early learning for every child today* (ELECT).

ECCDC Blogs and Podcasts

If you would like to find out more about Mindfulness, check out ECCDC's blogs or podcasts.



[Click here](#) to read *Calming the Chaos - Strategies to Invite A Sense of Calm and Peace Within Your Early Learning Program*



[Click here](#) to listen to *The Power of Self-Care in Caring for Others: With Elizabeth Skronski & Lisa Clarke.*

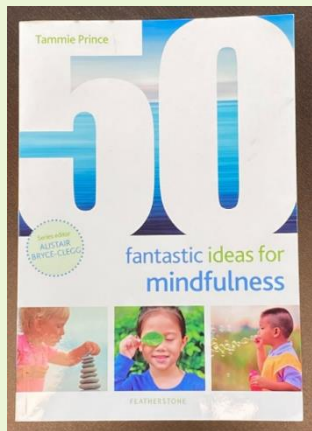
Professional Development and Networking Opportunities

This summer, we're thoughtfully planning and preparing an exciting new edition of ESTEEM—our 2025–2026 training catalogue, launching this fall. Stay tuned! The upcoming ESTEEM will land in your inbox later this summer, filled with fresh opportunities to inspire, connect, and grow your professional practice.

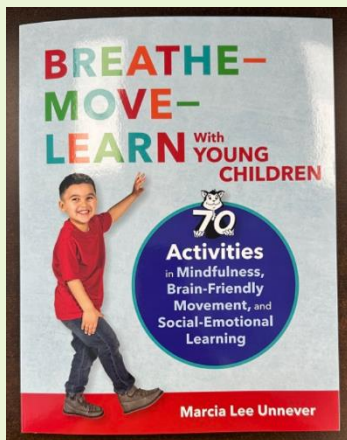
Mindfulness Books and Resources

The ECCDC has many books and resources available to borrow from the ECCDC resource lending library. [Click here](#) to search the catalogue for resources to borrow or to purchase from ECCDC's E-Store, [click here](#).

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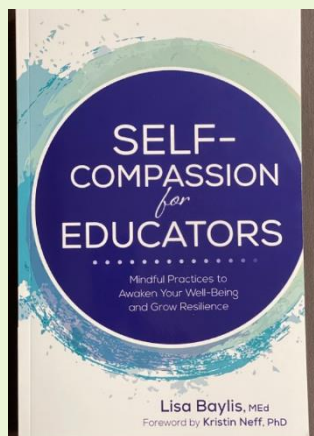
50 Fantastic Ideas for
Mindfulness by
Tammie Prince



Breathe-Move-Learn with
Young Children: 70 Activities
in Mindfulness, Brain-
Friendly Movement, and
Social-Emotional Learning by
Marcia Lee Unnever



Story Sack - Mindful Mr.
Sloth



Self-Compassion for
Educators; Mindful
Practices to Awaken
your Well-Being and
Grow Resilience by Lisa
Baylis



Provocation for Learning Kit
Taking Care of Myself:
Resources to Support
Mindfulness for Young
Children

Resource Delivery Service

If you're an ECCDC member located in Niagara, you can take advantage of our free resource delivery service. We'll bring materials right to your program! To learn more or to arrange a delivery, please contact the ECCDC at 905.646.7311 ext. 304 or [email](#) us.

Of Interest

Are you interested in learning more about how you can integrate active play concepts into your daily programming? If you answered yes, then this free program 'Learn Through Active Play' offered by Active for Life, is for you. For more details and free resources, [click here](#).

Coming Soon

July's ECCDC podcast conversations will be focused on school-age programs and we will be in conversation with Jamie-Lee Wegler, the host of 'The Forgotten ECE'. Keep an eye on your inbox during the middle of July.

The ECCDC podcast is available on [Spotify](#) and [Apple](#) Podcasts! Stay tuned - you won't want to miss these insightful conversations. [Click here](#) to listen to other ECCDC Podcasts

Educator Well Being through Mindfulness: Mindful Eating

The second idea for your Mindful Monday is centered around the practice of **Mindful Eating**. This approach transforms the act of eating from a routine task into a mindful experience, enhancing your relationship with food while nourishing both your body and mind.

Understanding Mindful Eating

Mindful eating is about fully engaging in the experience of eating, paying attention to the tastes, textures, and sensations of your food. It's a practice that encourages you to slow down, savour each bite, and truly listen to your body's hunger and fullness cues. This mindful approach can help reduce overeating, improve digestion, and even enhance your appreciation for the food you consume.



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Getting Started with Mindful Eating

Eat without Distractions	Turn off the TV and put away your phone. Eating without distractions allows you to fully focus on your meal.
Engage All Your Senses	Notice the colours, textures, smells, and flavours of your food. Appreciating these aspects can enhance your eating experience.
Chew Slowly	Take the time to chew your food thoroughly, which aids in digestion and allows you to really taste your food.
Listen to Your Body	Pay attention to your hunger and fullness signals. Eat when you're hungry and stop when you're comfortably full, not stuffed.
Reflect on Your Food's Journey	Consider where your food came from and the effort taken to prepare it. This can foster gratitude and a deeper connection to your meals.

Deepening Your Practice

As you become more comfortable with mindful eating, try to incorporate it into more meals throughout your week. You can also explore further by trying new foods and observing your reactions to them, both physically and emotionally.

Mindful Eating and Health

Adopting a mindful approach to eating can lead to healthier food choices, better portion control, and a more harmonious relationship with food. It's not about restricting yourself, but rather about understanding and responding to your body's needs.

Incorporating Mindful Eating into your Mindful Monday can be a transformative step towards better health and well-being. It invites you to create a more thoughtful and appreciative relationship with your meals, turning everyday eating into a mindful, enjoyable experience.