



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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Learning More about Mindfulness

By Wendy Overturf

The application of Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) has become increasingly popular in both research and practice in schools. [Recent research](#) (as reported from www.HealthDay.com) has suggested that daily mindfulness practices can help students regulate their emotions and behaviors and be prepared for instruction.

[Jon Kabat-Zinn](#) is a prominent figure in the field of mindfulness and is widely credited with bringing mindfulness into mainstream Western medicine and society. "Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally." (Kabat-Zinn, 2005).

Key Aspects of Mindfulness:

- **Present-Moment Awareness:** Mindfulness involves paying attention to the here and now, rather than getting lost in thoughts about the past or future.
- **Non-Judgmental Attitude:** It means observing experiences without labeling them as "good" or "bad." This helps create a sense of calm and acceptance, regardless of the situation.
- **Intentional Focus:** Mindfulness requires consciously directing your attention to whatever is happening, whether it's the breath, sensations in the body, sounds, or emotions.
- **Acceptance:** It means allowing your experiences, thoughts, and emotions to exist as they are, without immediately trying to change, suppress, or reject them.

Benefits of Mindfulness:

- **Reduces Stress:** Mindfulness can help lower stress levels by helping you stay grounded in the present, rather than worrying about past or future events.
- **Improves Focus and Attention:** Regular practice can enhance concentration and the ability to

stay focused on tasks.

- **Enhances Emotional Regulation:** Mindfulness helps people become more aware of their emotions, which can improve emotional control and reduce impulsive reactions.
- **Promotes Better Mental Health:** It has been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Here are some examples of mindfulness practices that can be particularly beneficial:

Breathing Exercises

- **Bubble Breathing:** Have the child imagine they are blowing bubbles. Encourage them to take a deep breath in and then slowly exhale as if they are blowing the biggest bubble possible. This can help them slow down their breathing and focus on their breath.
- **Buddy Breathing:** For kids with mobility challenges, consider partner breathing exercises. They can place their hand on a partner's back or chest and feel the breath moving in and out, creating a shared calming experience.

Mindful Movement

- [Chair Yoga:](#) Adaptive yoga poses can be done from a seated position, focusing on gentle stretches, twists, and mindful breathing.
- **Animal Walks:** Encourage movements that mimic animals (like a bear crawl or butterfly flaps) to combine physical activity with imaginative play and mindfulness.

Guided Imagery

- Use stories or guided meditations that encourage visualization. For example, ask the child to imagine being a tree with deep roots or a mountain standing strong. Tailor the imagery to their interests and abilities. [Here](#) is another example.

Mindful Sensory Activities

- **Sensory Jars:** Fill jars with glitter and water. Have the child shake the jar and watch the glitter settle, which can serve as a metaphor for settling the mind.
- **Texture Exploration:** Encourage children to explore different textures (like soft fabric, a rough sponge, or smooth stones) with their eyes closed, focusing on the sensations.

Body Scan Meditation

- A [guided body scan](#) can be used to encourage the child to focus on different parts of their body, noticing any sensations or feelings, starting from the toes and moving up to the head.

Mindful Storytelling

- Use [read alouds](#) that incorporate mindfulness themes, such as noticing sounds, breathing with characters, or focusing on positive emotions.

Mindfulness through Play

- Use playful activities like mindful coloring, building with blocks, or simple games that require focused attention and gentle reminders to stay present.

Emotion Regulation Tools

- Use a [“feelings wheel”](#) to help children identify and express their emotions. Pair these tools with breathing exercises or grounding techniques to help them stay calm and centered.

Additional Resources

[Apps for Mindfulness & Wellbeing](#)

[Change to Chill: Mindfulness & Stress Relief](#)

[How to Meditate](#)

[How to Help Your Kids Practice Mindfulness](#)

[Mindfulness Practices: Take 5ive](#)

[Self-Calming in the Midst of Emotional Turmoil](#)

[Mindfulness for Students with Disabilities-Archived Webinar from WI FACETS](#)

UPCOMING WI FACETS EVENTS

[IEP 8: Writing the IEP \(Part 4\) \(Pre-recorded\)](#)

Date: November 5, 2024

Presenter: Ann Zielke, WI FACETS

[IEP 8: Redacción del IEP- Parte 4](#)

Date: November 7, 2024

Presenter: Nathaly Silva, WI FACETS

[What Options do Parents Have if they Disagree with a Decision of the School?](#)

Date: November 13, 2024

Presenter: Michael Hickey, WI DPI

[Serving on Groups – The Role of Families & Skills for Serving on Groups \(Parts 7 & 8\)](#)

Date: November 14, 2024

Presenter: Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

[IEP 9: Revisions and Extended School Year \(ESY\)\(Pre-recorded\)](#)

Date: November 19, 2024

Presenter: Ann Zielke, WI FACETS

[WISE Coalition Meeting: Child, Adolescent and Young Adult Mental Health: Suicide](#)

Date: November 19, 2024, 9:30am-11:30am

Location: Virtual

[Mental Health and the IEP](#)

Date: November 20, 2024

Presenters: Tim Peerenboom and Eva Shaw, WI DPI

[¿Qué es la mediación en educación especial y cómo solicitarla?](#)

Date: November 21, 2024

Presenter: Nelsinia Ramos, WI FACETS

HOME LEARNING



Daylight Saving Time Ends-Parent Tips

In most states, daylight saving time (DST) ends on November 3, 2024. In the fall, clocks in most states are moved back one hour. This extra hour that is gained back can impact your child and even you as a parent if you don't prepare for these changes in advance.

Tips on How to Adjust to “Fall Back”

- Adjust your child's bedtime 3 days before daylight saving time ends by moving bedtime later by 30 minutes for 3 consecutive days.
- Tire your child with physical activities during the day.
- Be sure to keep the window covered in your child's room to block out the sunlight in the morning to help them sleep later in the morning.



Promote Literacy at Home

For many, the love for books started at an early age from the stories our parents read to us. Providing your children with plentiful opportunities to listen to stories will help them learn to read and comprehend stories on their own. They also begin to think more actively as they listen to stories and picture the scenes described, wondering how the story will develop. When read to frequently, children can grow to love reading and will take the initiative to read more on their own.

Here are additional ways you can promote family literacy at home.

- Set aside time each day for reading. Remember that children who read 20 minutes a day, 5 days a week, are exposed to 1.8 million words in one school year. This leads to increased general knowledge, communication, analytical skills, and obviously will enrich your child's vocabulary substantially. Compare this to students who read only 5 minutes per day – they will only be exposed to 282,000 words per school year.
- Keep books visible around the house.
- Make regular visits to the library.
- Read the book version of your child's favorite movie.
- Visit [WI FACETS Supporting Literacy at Home](#) page for more great ideas!

[The Five Finger Rule for Reading Will Help Your Child Find a 'Just-Right' Book](#) [Five Finger Rule \(in Spanish\)](#)

This technique works particularly well for children in late kindergarten through early second grade when they are independently selecting books.

Here's how it works: Your child opens a book to the first page. They read the page and hold up one finger for every word they don't know or can't pronounce. The number of fingers they're holding up by the end of the page tells them if the book is the right level:

- 0-1 fingers: It's too easy.
- 2-3 fingers: It's just right.
- 4-5 fingers: It's too hard (or best read aloud with a parent).

Keep in mind that it's a starting point — not a definite rule. no matter what a book's Five Finger Rule score is. If your child is motivated to read a book that might be too difficult, you can always read the book with them.



Veterans Day - November 11, 2024

This is the day our country honors the men and women who have served in the United States military.

Older children can write a thank-you letter to a veteran. If you don't know a veteran the letter could be sent to one of the Veteran Hospitals. Addresses for a Veterans Hospital in Wisconsin can be found [here](#).



[24 Ways to Learn Math at Home](#)

Kids who learn basic math concepts before kindergarten have a better shot at future mathematics success. Try these fun ideas at home to help your child learn about math throughout your day!

They all can be incorporated into your child's daily routines.



Practicing Gratitude as a Family

Being thankful often means we've taken some time to slow down, think about the things that are most important to us, and remember the people who have made positive impacts on our lives. And practicing gratitude — [even in difficult times](#) — is [rewarding](#) for the whole family. [When we focus on what we are grateful for, it brings us happiness.](#) To talk with your child about gratitude, thankfulness, and appreciating those who help us, [start with a few picture books](#). Help them identify things that make them feel good inside, like a favorite stuffed animal or a visit from grandma. Then use the activities below to explore how your family can take time to recognize the things they're grateful for on Thanksgiving Day and all year long.

[Create a thankful Tree](#)

Talk with your child about what they're thankful for. Help them write down the different things they are grateful or thankful for on leaves that they have drawn and cut out from colored paper. Younger children can draw a picture of what they are thankful for on their leaf. Create a thankful tree for your own Thank You Day - or Thanksgiving - celebration.

[Thanksgiving Tales](#)

Here are ten recommended books for kids ages 0-9 that celebrate sharing, community, and family. Read these stories to the children in your life to help them see what the spirit of Thanksgiving is really all about.

[Books to inspire Gratitude](#)

Check out these books to help educate your kids on why being thankful is so important.

Source: [PBS Kids for Parents](#)

UPCOMING STATE EVENTS

[Special Education Conference 2024](#)

Join others from around the state and Midwest to learn, relax, network, and gather new ideas and resources.

Dates: November 14-15, 2024

Location: Kalahari Resort and Convention Center, WI Dells, WI

[Training for Home Language Interpreters: Supporting Families through the Special Education Process](#)

For those seeking training for home language interpreters for families at IEP meetings, DPI has partnered with WI FACETS, LEAs, and other organizations to develop a one-day training for home language interpreters who interpret for families at IEP meetings. Language interpretation training is a requirement to meet the provisions outlined in DPI's [Providing Language Assistance to Parents guidance document](#). The training provides increased awareness of state and federal laws, regulations and policies related to the educational rights of students who receive special education through an IEP and who may also be English Language Learners. The training also provides increased knowledge of legal responsibilities and requirements related to translation and interpretation of special education terms and concepts, tools, and resources for interpreters. Finally, the training supports improved skills to handle common ethical considerations while interpreting IEP meetings.

Our first VIRTUAL training for the 2024-25 school year will be on Friday, November 22nd from 8am to 2pm.

Please use this link to register - [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0qdu-](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0qdu-tqz4jE9VIMX23utHx6ggeYMY5N5Z9)

[tqz4jE9VIMX23utHx6ggeYMY5N5Z9](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0qdu-tqz4jE9VIMX23utHx6ggeYMY5N5Z9)

For more information contact Lori Karcher, lkarcher@wifacets.org

[Building the Heart of Successful Schools-Save the Date!](#)

The Building the Heart of Successful Schools Conference connects and inspires Wisconsin educators in order to serve every student.

Dates: December 4-5, 2024 (Room reservations close on November 3, 2024)

Location: Glacier Canyon Lodge, Wisconsin Dells, WI

[Virtual Workshop - Executive Function Essentials: Practical Tools for Everyday Life](#)

Join the Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin and the Autism Society of Minnesota for a neurodivergent-friendly look at executive function with tools, tips, and strategies to work with your brain. Whether you are looking to boost your own executive function or support someone else, this workshop offers tools that can be implemented right away, empowering you to navigate your own life and your own needs with the approaches that work for you.

Date: December 5, 2024, 9am-12pm

Location: Virtual

[23rd Annual Wisconsin Transition Conference](#)

Join hundreds of your colleagues at the 23rd Annual Transition Conference. In addition to the keynote speakers, the conference will have over 20 breakout sessions and built in networking time.

Dates: February 13-14, 2025

Location: Kalahari Resort and Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells, WI

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Data Shows Wisconsin Youth Continue Dealing with Mental Health Challenges

In July 2024 the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) released the 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Summary Report (YBRS). According to the news release from the DPI, the [2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Summary Report](#) provides a window into the mental and physical health and the emotional well-being of Wisconsin's youth. Among key findings, students generally reported experiencing significant mental health challenges while having less support at school and at home. According to the survey, 59 percent of high school students said they have experienced at least one mental health challenge over the past 12 months. Students also reported an increase in social media and overall screen usage, with additional decreases in the amount of sleep they get each night. Additional information and resources on the [YBRS can be found on the DPI's website](#).

ONLINE RESOURCES: Emotional Behavioral Disabilities



[Center for Parent Information and Resources \(CPIR\)](#)

Find information about the definition, characteristics, causes, and frequencies of emotional and behavioral disorders, as well as brief information related to specific disorders. Links to numerous other resources are also included on the website. This is the [link](#) to this information in Spanish.

[Emotional Behavioral Disability | Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#)

This site has a variety of technical assistance and best practice resources related to [comprehensive special education evaluations](#) in which the characteristics of emotional behavioral disabilities are assessed. The website also includes the emotional behavioral disability category criteria worksheet in Wisconsin.

[Inclusive Strategies to Address Behavioral Needs for Students with IEPs | Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#)

This professional learning series provides resources and strategies to help adults address the behavioral needs of students with individualized education programs (IEPs).

[Questions and Answers: Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions \(from U.S Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services\)](#)

This updated document from July 2022 includes additional questions and answers that address topics that have arisen as the field continues to carry out the discipline provisions of IDEA and its implementing regulations.

[Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports \(PBIS\)](#)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) [is an evidence-based](#), tiered framework for supporting *students'* behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. When implemented with fidelity, [PBIS improves](#) social emotional competence, academic success, and school climate.

[Mental Health America of Wisconsin \(MHA\)](#)

Mental Health America of Wisconsin is an affiliate of the [nation's leading community-based non-profit](#) dedicated to helping all Americans achieve wellness by living mentally healthier lives. MHA is dedicated to improving the mental health of all individuals through advocacy, education and service.

[Youth Suicide Prevention](#)

Visit the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's website for information and resources related to youth suicide prevention.

[Wisconsin Family Ties](#)

Wisconsin Family Ties (WFT) is a statewide nonprofit organization run by families for families with children and adolescents impacted by social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health challenges. The [WFT Facebook page](#) has links to a variety of resources related to emotional behavioral disabilities.

[NAMI \(National Alliance on Mental Illness\) Wisconsin](#)

NAMI Wisconsin provides support, education, and advocacy for people affected by mental illness. They offer family support groups and programs like "Family-to-Family," which helps families better understand and support their loved ones with mental health conditions and provides a [resource guide](#) to help families navigate the mental health care system.

[Anxiety and Depression Association of America \(ADAA\)](#)

ADAA is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to the prevention, treatment, and cure of anxiety, depressive, obsessive-compulsive, and trauma-related disorders through education, practice, and research. Their mission focuses on improving the quality of life for children and adults affected with these disorders.

[Providing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports to Students with Disabilities and Use of Functional Behavioral Assessments](#)

Information update bulletin from the Wisconsin DPI intended to assist IEP teams in understanding the technical and procedural requirements in identifying and supporting students' behavioral needs through changes in adult practices using comprehensive special education evaluations, Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs), IEP development, Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs), and the implementation of positive behavioral interventions and supports.

[Seclusion and Restraint in Wisconsin Schools](#)

WI FACETS, Wisconsin Family Ties and Disability Rights Wisconsin collaborated to develop a [brochure](#) explaining seclusion and restraint which can be downloaded from the WI FACETS website.

[International OCD \(Obsessive Compulsive Disorder\) Foundation \(IOCDF\)](#)

The mission of the IOCDF is to help those affected by obsessive compulsive disorder and related disorders to live full and productive lives. There is information and resources on the website specifically intended for parents and children.

[WISE \(Initiative for Stigma Elimination\)](#)

WISE is a national coalition of organizations and individuals promoting inclusion and support for all affected by mental illness by advancing evidence-based practices for stigma reduction efforts. The Community Learning and Engagement Department of Rogers provides the staff to support the work of WISE. People with mental health challenges sharing their recovery experiences is the current, primary, evidence-based practice to reduce stigma, and drives the focus of WISE. They promote the power of strategic contact with people in recovery to end stigma in schools, healthcare, congregations, workplaces and wherever humans interact.

Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports ([PBIS](#)) is a strategy schools use to teach children expected behavior. Check this [article](#) for more detailed information on PBIS.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for encouraging your child to help clean up after dinner can involve several strategies:

- **Clear Expectations:** Start by explaining why cleaning up is important. Make sure your child knows what tasks are involved (e.g., clearing the table, wiping surfaces, putting dishes in the dishwasher).
 - **Visual Cues:** Use a visual checklist or a picture chart that outlines the steps for cleaning up. This can help your child understand what needs to be done and provide a sense of accomplishment as they check off each task.
 - **Positive Reinforcement:** Praise your child specifically for their efforts (e.g., “Thank you for putting the dishes in the dishwasher! You did a great job!”). Younger children may benefit from using a reward system, such as earning a sticker for each time they help.
 - **Modeling and Teaching:** Demonstrate how to do each task correctly and do it together at first. Gradually reduce your assistance as your child gains confidence and independence.
 - **Fun and Engagement:** Turn clean-up time into a game or play their favorite music to make it more enjoyable. You could use a timer and challenge them to finish a task before the time is up.
 - **Consistent Routine:** Make clean-up a regular part of the dinner routine. Consistency helps children know what to expect and builds habits over time.
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RESEARCH

Mindfulness for Students Classified with Emotional/Behavioral Disorder

Malow, Micheline S.; Austin, Vance L.

Insights into Learning Disabilities, v13 n1 p81-93 2016

[Read Full Article](#)

A six-week investigation utilizing a standard mindfulness for adolescents’ curriculum and norm-based standardized resiliency scale was implemented in a self-contained school for students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (E/BD). Informal integration of mindfulness activities into a classroom setting was examined for ecological appropriateness and improvement of student resiliency as conceptualized by pre and post-tests using a standardized measure. T-tests demonstrated that students perceived a significantly greater sense of personal mastery after six weeks of mindfulness activities, defined by the scale as optimism,

self-efficacy, and adaptability. Additionally, students perceived a significant decrease in the level of emotional reactivity defined as sensitivity, recovery and impairment. Although a third scale, relatedness, did not reach significance, it was strongly supported and represented a trend in the significant direction. The results, both quantitatively and qualitatively, speak to the power of incorporating informal mindfulness activities into the daily educational curriculums of students.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Newsletter Topics:

December: Communication

January: Transition

February: Intellectual Disabilities

To submit contributions of articles, events, or resources you may use the [Word document](#). Send submissions to [Wendy Overturf](#). If you are unable to access the form, you may send the information in an email.

Material appropriate for the monthly newsletter include web links to family involvement/parent leadership resources, advertisements for statewide trainings for parents, youth or parent/educator audiences, information about statewide parent agencies, recent research pertaining to family engagement, and family engagement success articles.

This monthly update is provided by Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Support (WI FACETS) to share statewide information regarding parent leadership and family involvement. If you would like to receive this monthly update or if you would like to have your name removed from the distribution list, please email [WI FACETS](#).

The WI FACETS Family Engagement E-Newsletter can be found online: www.servingongroups.org/newsletter



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