

# The importance of mindfulness for young children

## Why is Mindfulness important for young children?

Young children are often naturally mindful, particularly in their play; but as their lives become more rushed and structured they are less able to tune in to their senses, inner thoughts and emotions. Children are often operating under an increased or heightened level of stress which sees the primitive areas of the brain (where your fight or flight response and body regulation live) over active. Under stress, our pre frontal cortex, which allows us to pause before acting, to reason, to understand the consequences of our actions; and to show empathy and compassion for others can go 'off line'. Mindfulness helps calm down the reactive fight or flight response and to re-engage the central pre-frontal cortex, so we are using the whole of our brain instead of just the reactive, primitive part.



Mindfulness develops the whole brain and helps children to understand their emotions and feelings, reducing their risk of mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Practicing Mindfulness helps children to notice the positives, and develop a sense of appreciation, gratitude and contentment. All of that equals HAPPINESS!

When parents, or other trusted adults, share these activities mindfully with children, there can be significant benefits for developing and enhancing the bonds between children and their caregivers. It is a great practice to do together as a family to strengthen your relationships, and foster a positive environment, and to cultivate a sense of appreciation, gratitude and contentment for you and your children.

Developing focus and attention is also a great benefit to practicing Mindfulness. Many of us, including children, spend a great deal of our time multi-tasking. This means that developing neural pathways are not as effective as they could be, this can have significant consequences for learning and behaviour.

For more information on how you can help our environment, or to make some suggestions of your own, please go to [www.coolaustralia.org](http://www.coolaustralia.org)



**coolaustralia.org**  
Learn for life