



## Mindfulness Techniques for Early Childhood

Development of clarity, focus and calmness are some of the benefits of practicing mindfulness techniques.

Early Childhood students may show signs of overwhelm and anxiousness particularly when being introduced to challenging concepts or at times of separation.

Mindfulness techniques have been scientifically proven to provide relief from anxiety and can be integrated very easily into the day-to-day curriculum in any classroom.

Practicing mindfulness consistently will enable the practitioner to be better able to handle stressful situations and make healthier lifestyle choices.

## Mindfulness Techniques for Early Childhood

### Taste

**Direct Aim:** To quiet the mind; to bring the mind to one point of focus; to take the mind from activity to stillness.

**Indirect Aim:** To respond with reflectiveness, openness, and calmness in all situations; to achieve, maintain, and preserve health and prevent disease in both mind and body.

#### Early Childhood Taste Procedure:

1. Ask the child to choose a piece of fruit that he likes which can be easily eaten by hand without any cutting or preparation – make sure to wash the fruit before starting this experience.
2. Guide the child to sit in a quiet place, out of the sun, and look at the fruit.
3. Guide the child to take a bite into the fruit and take some time noticing the texture of the fruit – is the flesh a different texture to the skin?
4. Ask the child to chew the fruit slowly and to notice how the fruit tastes in his mouth – is it sweet, tart, a combination of both? Does the skin taste different to the flesh?
5. Tell the child to keep eating the fruit being mindful (taking note) of its texture and taste.
6. Tell the child to keep his attention on the taste of the fruit and how it makes him feel until he finishes the piece of fruit.
7. Then ask the child to sit quietly and notice how his body feels and how he feels emotionally once he has completely finished the piece of fruit.
8. Remind the child that if his mind wanders, without judgment, to bring his focus/awareness back to the experience and sensations of eating the piece of fruit and the after-effects of having eaten the fruit.
9. After practicing this Mindfulness Technique several times with different foods, encourage the child to make one eating experience each week a Mindfulness Taste experience; this would mean that the child would focus on each bite of food without any other distractions while eating.

**Notes:**

If the child does not like fruits, he can choose a vegetable that he likes which does not need preparation and can be eaten raw.

The Mindfulness Taste technique is a wonderful way to develop awareness about what value our food brings to us both physically and emotionally.

**Extensions:**

Ask the child to notice how it makes him feel when he eats a food that is considered a junk food. Ask the child to notice how he feels eating a food or group of foods that are considered healthy for him. Notice if any of the child changes his eating habits because of practicing the Mindfulness Technique of taste.

**Early Childhood Students:**

For this age group the adult will need to guide the students in the beginning, but after some time the children will show that they are ready to practice the Mindfulness technique of taste on their own.

It is generally recommended that the number of minutes spent in mindfulness or meditation is equal to the age of the child, so if a child were 5 years old the maximum number of minutes for stillness would not exceed 5 minutes. However, for this experience the amount of time spent will depend on the food being eaten.

It is most beneficial to practice mindfulness/meditation techniques – basically encouraging a child to embrace silence/stillness – twice per day. This would mean practicing once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

The benefits of this type of practice will slowly become apparent, but often includes better self-control on the part of the child, fewer outbursts from children prone to them, and a better ability to sit still and complete tasks and much more.