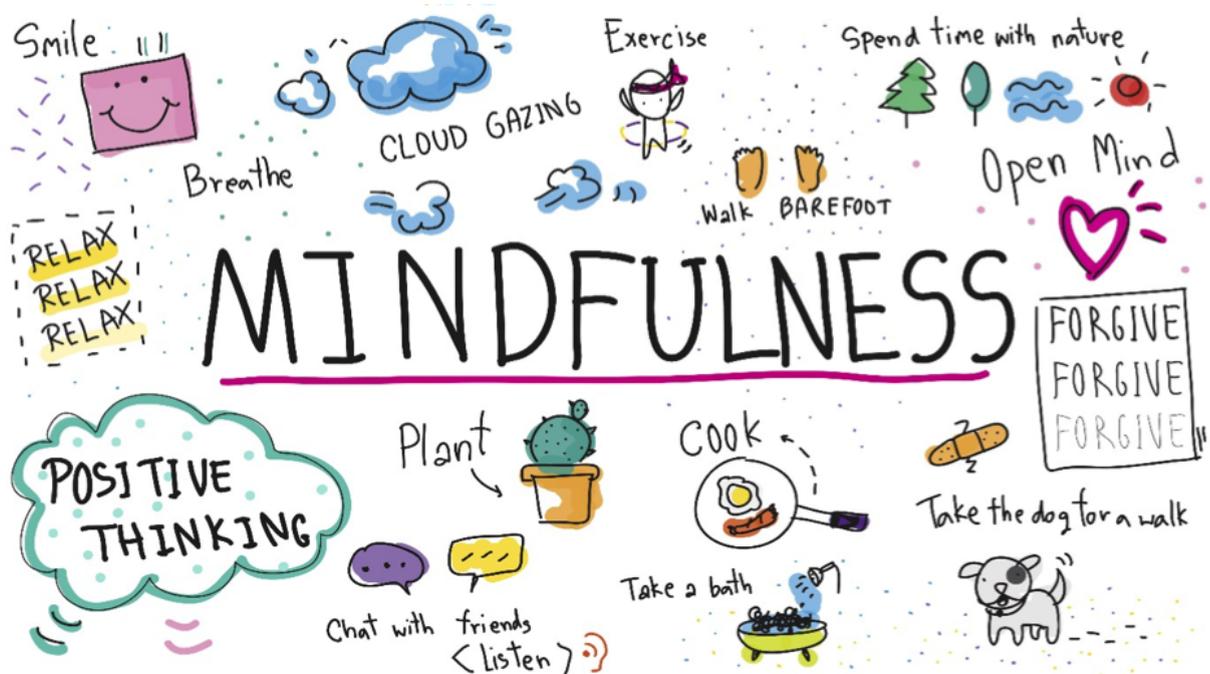




Mindfulness Newsletter



Wee Chicks are committed to ensuring well-being and **mindfulness** throughout all aspects of our services offered. It is important to take time out each day to practice

mindfulness as this helps children notice the positives and develop a sense of appreciation, gratitude and contentment.

All of which, equals happiness!



The Power of

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness can be defined simply as “*paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally.*”

- Jon Kabat-Zinn

In broader terms, **mindfulness** is a meditation practice, focusing on breathing firstly, to relax and create a calming effect, concentrating on the here and now. “The ultimate goal is to give you enough distance from disturbing thoughts and emotions, to be able to observe them without immediately reacting to them” (Child Mind Institute, 2019) i.e. through focusing on your breathing, rather than worries.



“Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens.”

- The Greater Good Science Centre, 2019

It can be too easy to just rush through life without stopping to notice much - paying attention to the present moment; to your own thoughts, feelings and the world around you can improve your mental wellbeing, helping you to “*enjoy life more and understand ourselves better.*” (NHS, 2019).

According to Professor Mark Williams, former director of the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, “*an important part of mindfulness is reconnecting with our bodies and the sensations they experience. This means waking up to the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of the present moment. That might be something as simple as the feel of a banister as we walk upstairs. It also includes awareness of our thoughts and feelings as they happen moment to moment.*” (NHS, 2019). In other words, **mindfulness** is about allowing ourselves to see the present moment, clearly. When we do that, it can **positively** change the way we see ourselves, and our lives.



Why do people need **mindfulness**?



Being mindful helps people in just about every part of their life. **Learning** how to be mindful when you're young gives you a chance to get really good at it and implement it daily to feel happier and enjoy things more!

The importance of **mindfulness** for **Children**:

Simply, **mindfulness** means paying full attention to something. It means slowing down to really notice what you're doing. It is the opposite of rushing or multitasking. "When you're **mindful**, you're taking your time. You're focusing in a relaxed, easy way." (Kids Health, 2019).



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** - **Mindfulness** develops the whole brain, helping children understand their emotions and feelings and essentially, reducing the risk of anxiety and depression.

In the last few years, research has shown that **mindfulness** is an effective way of treating children and adolescents with conditions ranging from ADHA, anxiety, autism, depression and stress - and the benefits are astonishing!

"Mindfulness also helps cultivate compassion, so families can come together and deepen connections - perfect for the summer break ahead."

- Sarah Romotsky, 2019

“Children have a natural proclivity for letting go of distractions and being in the moment. Teaching them how to harness it offers them access to their own resilience, which they can use throughout their lives.”

- Yoga Journal, 2019



Children are experts when it comes to **mindfulness**. Have you seen the focus a five-year-old brings to building a sandcastle or drawing her favorite place? Or how about the complete joy a trampoline brings? It is clear they know how to let go of distractions and be in the moment. But it can be hard to apply that natural ability to be aware of situations like the first day of school, a disagreement with a friend, or disappointment when plans change. It can be challenging for children to manage the regular ups and downs of life without letting stress build up and reacting with a fight-or-flight response when things feel uncomfortable. (Yoga Journal, 2019).

This is where learning specific **meditation** and **mindfulness** tools can help.

Mindfulness is being aware of our thoughts, feelings, sensations, and the surrounding environment at this moment. It also includes bringing acceptance to what we're experiencing rather than judging any of it as good or bad. Mindfulness is a way to become more comfortable with what we are experiencing, no matter what it is. (Yoga Journal, 2019).



Sometimes...



Talking about my problems and realising
that some of them were not so big.
Understanding what was causing the
problem helped me think about another
way of dealing with it.

- Liam, a young person

- Bernardo's 2019

How to get started

Here are some simple **mindfulness** activities for children, according to Kids Health, 2017:

These exercises can help practice **mindfulness** in four different ways. Try doing all of them!

“As you do each exercise, you will probably find that your mind wanders after a minute or two. That's normal — minds do that. Your job is to gently bring your attention back to the thing you are focused on. The more you practice, the better you train your brain to pay attention.”

- Kids Health, 2017

1. Mindful Eating

You can do this with an orange, an apple — or even something as tiny as a raisin. The idea is to really pay attention to what you are eating.

Let's say you decide to do mindful eating with an orange. Your job is to eat the orange slowly, without rushing. You can do this mindful eating exercise with your eyes open or closed.

1. Start by holding your orange. Roll it in your hand. Notice how it feels.
2. Hold the orange near your nose. What does it smell like? Take a whiff of the bittersweet smell of the orange peel.
3. If you have your eyes open, notice how the orange looks. Pay attention to whether the skin is smooth or bumpy. If you hold it firmly, is it squishy?
4. Slowly peel your orange, paying attention to how it feels in your fingers. Notice the juiciness, and whether the inside of the orange smells different from the outside.
5. Is your mouth watering? Go ahead and taste your orange. Notice how it feels on your tongue, and against your teeth. Notice the flavor, the texture, and the juiciness as you chew each piece slowly. Take your time as you chew, taste, smell, and feel each bite of your orange.

2. Mindful Breathing

With this exercise, you focus your attention on breathing. You want to pay attention to your breath in an easy way — on purpose, but not forced.

1. Sit up in a comfortable way. Close your eyes.
2. Notice your breathing as you inhale and exhale normally. Just pay attention to your breath as it goes in and out. Can you feel the place where the air tickles your nostrils?
3. Pay attention to how the breath gently moves your body. Can you notice your belly or your chest moving as you breathe?
4. Sit for a few minutes, just paying attention to your gentle breathing. See how relaxed you can feel just sitting, breathing in and out.
5. When your mind starts to wander and think about something else, gently guide your attention back to your breathing.

3. Mindful Walking

This exercise is about paying attention to how your body moves as you walk slowly.

1. To start, pick up one foot and take a step forward, in slow motion. Pay attention to how you naturally keep your balance.
2. Now walk in slow motion, step by step. Notice how your arms and legs and feet move. Pay attention to how your knees bend and straighten, as you lift one foot and then the other, nice and slow.
3. Breathe in and out, in time with your steps. See if you can keep your attention focused on walking slowly, step by step, as you relax and breathe.
4. Whenever your mind wanders, gently guide it back to your s-l-o-w motion moving. Keep breathing, in and out, as you enjoy moving in slow motion.

4. Mindful Words

1. Think of a word that seems calm or soothing. This could be a word like "peace" or "love" or "peaceful" or "snowflake" or "sunlight" or "hum" or "calm."
2. Think of the word to yourself. Say it silently and slowly in your mind. Say your word to yourself with each breath you take, in and out. Keep your attention gently focused on your word.
3. When your mind wanders, guide your attention back to your word, and keep saying it gently and slowly while you relax and breathe.
4. Can you do this for a whole minute? Can you do it for 5 minutes?

*“When you practice, you will probably notice that you feel calm and relaxed. If you keep practicing, you might start to notice that it's easier to focus your attention on things like schoolwork or listening. You may begin to feel calmer and more patient in your everyday life. **You may find that when little things go wrong, you can handle them better.**”*

- Kids Health, 2017



Here are a few extra things which we can do in our everyday lives, to make a little time for **mindfulness**...



****You don't have to be good at something for it to be good for you!****

Simple 'Mindfulness' Activities

Sky Gazing/Cloud Watching

“Sky gazing is a way to feel release from the narrow confines of the personality or ego. It brings relaxation Peace Joy & a fresh, crisp sense of connecting to reality; the natural state of things”

- Chad Forman 2019



Colouring



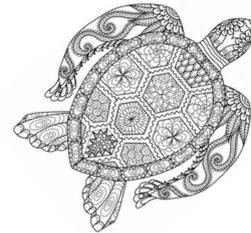
Colour Therapy is a holistic approach which aims to bring “balance to the energy of our body” (School of Natural Health Sciences, 2019).

“Scientifically, colours have been proven to affect our moods and perception, and there is evidence of this form of therapy dating back to ancient Egypt, historic China and ages-old India. In fact, healing by means of color and light was the first type of ‘therapy’ used by man.”

- School of Natural Health Sciences, 2019



At Wee Chicks, we regularly take time out to do some **mindfulness** colouring - kids and staff!



Play

“Play builds the kind of free-and-easy, try-it-out, do-it-yourself character that our future needs.”

- James L. Hymes, Jr.

...Play is the most natural way for children to learn, grow, develop and make sense of the world and **their place within it.**

Benefits of play:



- ★ Healthy brain development
- ★ Fit and active bodies
- ★ Cognitive agility and learning
- ★ Emotional regulation and strength
- ★ Inquisitive minds
- ★ Imagination and creativity
- ★ Social etiquette and making friends
- ★ Conflict resolution
- ★ Negotiating skills
- ★ Managing and assessing risk and challenging situations

(Playboard, 2019)



Go on a SAFARI

Go outside on an exciting adventure, try picking up a small rock or touching a plant or flower.



Notice the bugs or the birds. Take a moment to kneel down and touch the earth.

Walk mindfully paying close attention to everything. Make sure you walk in silence because you want to notice all those little details.



simple MINDFULNESS

@BLESSHEMESSY

BREATHE

FOCUS ON YOUR
BREATH AS YOU
INHALE + EXHALE
THROUGH THE NOSE
+ OUT THROUGH THE MOUTH.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR SENSES

FOCUS ON WHAT TEXTURES,
SOUNDS, SMELLS, TASTES.
NOTICING WHATS HAPPENING
AROUND YOU WILL MAKE YOU
MORE PRESENT.

WRITE A GRATITUDE LIST

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU'RE
GRATEFUL HELPS BREAK
YOUR THOUGHT CYCLE.

GO OUTSIDE

GOING FOR A WALK
OR EVEN JUST SITTING
OUTDOORS. ANYTIME
YOU MAKE SPACE TO
CONNECT TO NATURE
YOU CONNECT TO YOURSELF.

NOTICE YOUR INNER DIALOGUE

NOTICE HOW YOU SPEAK
TO YOURSELF. WITH LOVE?
FORGIVENESS? OR IS IT MORE
NEGATIVE. WE SPEND A LOT
OF TIME IN OUR HEAD MAKE
IT A NICE PLACE TO BE.

Additional Information

Studies have shown that the perfect amount of time for a **hug** to last in order to have a **positive** effect on both your **mental** and **physical** health is **20 seconds**. This is because a hug can release the hormone oxytocin, which causes you to feel **happy**.



Hug your babies. Even on days when they've been beyond difficult, and have turned your world upside down, still hug them.

And tell them you love them. In this scary and uncertain world, they need to know that your love is unconditional.

20 SECOND HUGS LIFELONG POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR YOUR KIDS

@healthiest_baby 🧡



Less anxiety



Bolsters optimism



Higher self-esteem



Reduces fear



Less behavioral problems



Happier kids



More resilient



Increases trust



Less anxiety

FEELING ANGRY?

A CHECKLIST FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- WALK AWAY**
& cool down 
- TAKE A BREAK**
& use a calming tool
like a stress ball 
- TAKE STEADY BREATHS**
& focus on
exhaling slowly 
- PUSH AGAINST THE WALL**
or floor &
then relax 
- COUNT TO 20**
or more until
I feel calmer 
- MOVE, EXERCISE**
stretch, do yoga
or play a sport 
- USE I-MESSAGES**
& say what I
need & how I
want to be
treated 
- SCRIBBLE ON PAPER**
then rip or
crumple it up 

Healthy packed lunch ideas



Monday
 Bagel with tuna,
 sweetcorn and low fat
 mayo.
 Fresh fruit chopped into
 plain yogurt.
 Water

Tuesday
 Chicken, lettuce, tomato, onion and
 low fat, mayo wrap.
 Pot of custard
 Grapes.
 Water.

Wednesday
 Ham and vegetable
 pasta.
 Chopped grapes.
 Plain yogurt.
 Small fruit smoothie
 (Fruit juice and smoothies should
 be limited to a total of 150ml a
 day)

Thursday
 Egg and onion
 sandwich.
 Carrot sticks.
 Fruit pot.
 Milk

Friday
 Roast beef,
 lettuce, tomato roll.
 Fruit salad.
 Plain yogurt.
 Water



WE LOVE OUR HEALTHY SNACKS! 🍓



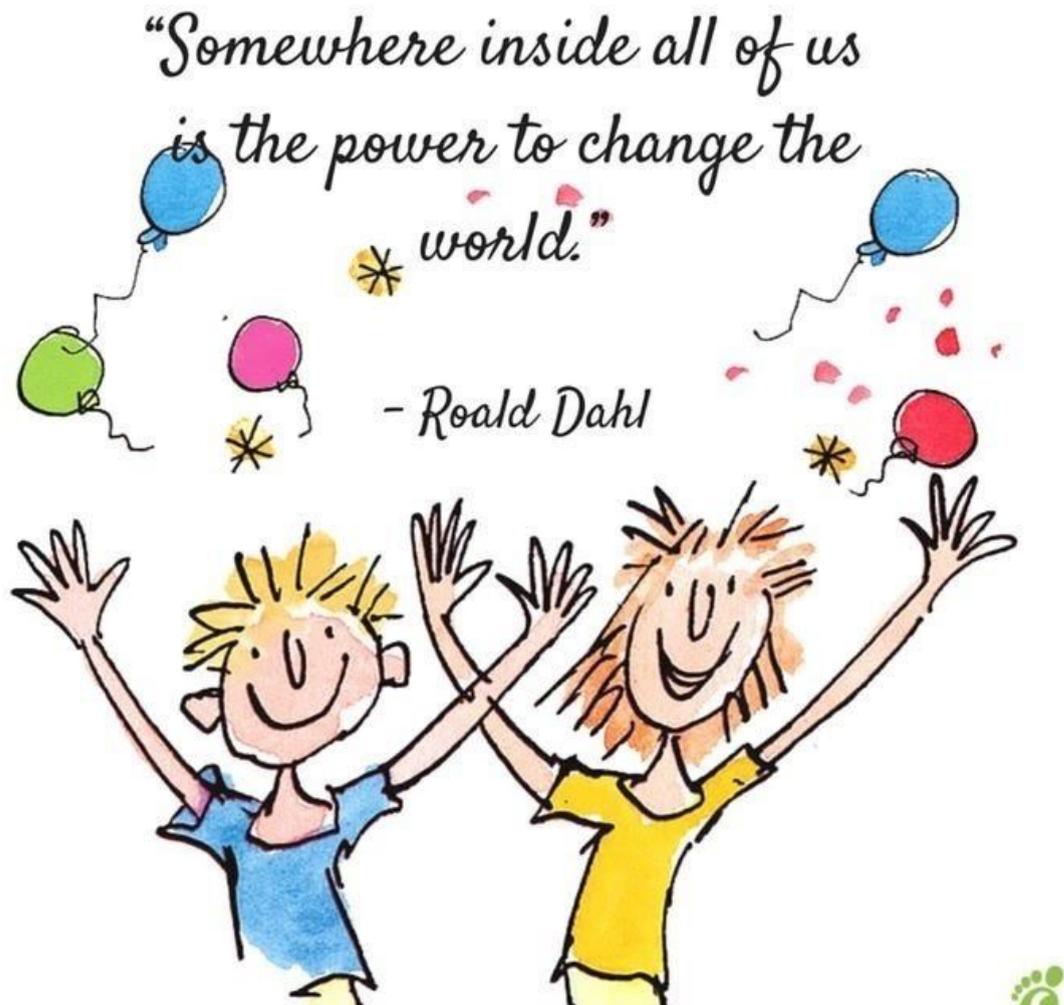
WEE CHICKS SPORTS AND WELL-BEING CAMP



Summer 2019

Wee Chicks Summer Camp has something for everyone. From messy play and plenty of fun activities to **mindfulness** and **gratitude** exercises to help with development; building stronger minds for a healthier future. Your 'Wee Chicks' had lots of fun with us over the summer. We hope to see you all again next year!

And remember...



Kelly Molloy

Managing Director

and the Wee Chicks team! xx

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