

Mindfulness Exercises for Parents



Parenting often provides daily challenging experiences. For example, everyone is buckled in the car ready to go and one child announces they need to go back inside to go potty. After getting 3 minutes down the road another child points out that he doesn't have any shoes on. At this point you are running late and feeling your anxiety level increase. Although in the big picture these events are minor, they still cause irritation.

As a parent, you will need to react appropriately, but your body is reacting to the stress by:

- releasing adrenaline
- increasing your heart rate
- reducing your ability to problem solve or think creatively

These physiological responses would be appropriate if you were facing a life or death situation but aren't appropriate for forgotten shoes or a last minute potty run. Practicing [mindfulness exercises](#) will help you live in the present moment and remain peaceful and relaxed. They will reduce your anxiety levels and help enhance concentration.

Consider the following [mindfulness exercises for parents](#) which will allow you to develop the skills needed for those unexpected minor but stressful situations. Practice the skills when you are not in a stressful moment so they become automatic. Note that many of these mindful awareness practices were [published](#) by Myla and Jon Kabat-Zinn. Considered pioneers in mindfulness, this couple created many practices specifically for parents that improve parent-child relationships.

1. Try to look at the world from the point of view of your child. Attempt to do this every day. Let go of your own world point of view for at least a few minutes.
2. Consider how you sound and appear to your child. What would it be like to have yourself as a parent? Does this influence how you want to relate to your child (what you say and how you say it)?
3. Look for ways to balance your needs and the needs of your child. Consider being selfless, where possible, and putting the needs of your child over your own.
4. Listen carefully. Focus without distractions such as TV, social media, and phones. Be fully engaged as you listen to the stories your child tells.
5. Attempt to see your child as perfect just as they are. Accept them even when it is difficult.
6. Focus on what your expectations are for your child and how you communicate those expectations. Do you have their best interest in mind?
7. Attempt the mindful walk experiment. While walking pay attention to your breathing and the way the ground feels under your feet. Observe your surroundings. Let other thoughts go and focus on the sights and feelings of the moment.
8. Focus on your breathing. With practice this will become an automatic skill that you will just start doing in stressful situation.

Attempt to practice all of these skills daily. It may seem difficult at first but with repetition you will become skilled. Eventually you will find yourself automatically engaging in these mindful behaviors. You will find your parent-child relationship improves as your responses to minor stressful situations become driven less by anxiety.

[Contact us](#) for additional information about mindfulness and mindfulness exercises.

Find more exercises related to [mindfulness with relationships and family](#) here.