



# 60 Mindful Minutes

Developing  
mindful  
behaviour in  
the nurture  
group

User Guide

By Tina Rae

[www.nurturegroups.org](http://www.nurturegroups.org)

The nurture  
group network <sup>®</sup>  
helping children and young people to succeed



## Introduction

This programme is designed to support young children within both the mainstream classroom context and within the nurture group setting. The key aim is to introduce and practise mindfulness, which is an approach that increases children's life skills by supporting them in developing the ability to both soothe and calm themselves; to pay attention to themselves in the world and to think about and reflect on both their actions and their relationships.

At the outset it is important to point out the fact that mindfulness is not simply an abstract body of knowledge. It is, in essence, a practical set of skills. For human beings, daily living is often extremely stressful and busy. Mindfulness supports us in becoming more fully aware of living right now, in the present moment. There is an increasing body of research that shows it can ultimately have long-term benefits for both our health and our levels of happiness.

Most of us, at some point, will have made a journey into work and when we get there suddenly realised that we didn't remember engaging in the actual task of driving. There are also times when we may be lying in a bath or having a shower and feeling the warm water on our bodies but not actually being present in that moment. Very often we will be thinking about something that we have to do or an event that took place previously or a meeting that we might need to organise. For many of us we can become entrenched in living our lives on an automatic pilot. We barely live in the present and don't pay attention to what is happening in our lives currently, at this particular moment. However, if we stop to really think about the situation it is this moment that is all we actually have.

*"Mindfulness is paying attention here and now with kindness and curiosity" (Association for Mindfulness in Education).*

### **Mindfulness has also been described as:**

*"The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose through the present moment, non judgementally, to the unfolding of experience moment by moment" (Kabat-Zinn).*

One of the simplest ways to get into a mindful state is to simply sit down on a chair, close your eyes and begin to focus on your breathing. As you sit still, relaxed but alert, you can then direct your attention to the sensation of each inhalation and exhalation, and also become aware of the feeling of air as it enters and then leaves your mouth or nostrils. While doing this, other thoughts will enter your mind. The idea is to become aware of such intrusions; noting each of them in turn without judgement and then simply let them pass. This is one of the key elements of mindfulness and the skill that is focused on throughout the 60 Mindful Minutes programme for young children.



## Acceptance

Treating our thoughts in this non-judgemental and more detached manner is also hugely positive in terms of accepting our thoughts and feelings. This is very important as it encourages us to be more tolerant and kind to ourselves. We do not need to beat ourselves up for having negative or intrusive thoughts or feelings; we simply have to accept them and know that we need to learn to be kinder to ourselves in both the short and longer terms.

## Attention regulation

Given that mindfulness doesn't demand that we clear our minds of all thoughts and feelings but rather allow them to pass by and be noted, this provides us with training in how to regulate and direct our attention at will. This is extremely important for young children in the learning context. Being able to bring back a wandering attention over and over again is, according to William James, 'the very route of judgement, character and will'. In his 1980 classic 'The Principles of Psychology', James highlights the fact that education should improve this faculty and if it did so then it would be 'the education par excellence'.

## The evidence base for mindfulness in schools

Historically it has generally been the case that mindfulness has been used in a clinical context by practitioners who are aiming to support those suffering with stress, anxiety and depression. However, in terms of using mindfulness as a preventative tool for children in the non-clinical context of schools, it has become increasingly apparent that this does offer a practical way forward in terms of delivery of such an intervention. There is to a very great extent an overlap with the current SEAL curriculum, specifically in the areas of developing self-awareness and emotional intelligence, motivation and social skills. As a tool used regularly and appropriately, mindfulness can increase children's level of self awareness. It also nurtures their capacity to regulate automatic emotional reactions to events and difficulties that they may encounter on a daily basis in both the school and social contexts. There is an increasing evidence base to support this intervention. This includes the publication of the first peer-reviewed controlled study (2010) on the delivery of mindfulness in schools. This was implemented by Huppert & Johnson from the Cambridge Wellbeing Institute.

A four-week syllabus was delivered for use in two independent, fee-paying boys' schools, and in total 173 students took part in the study. Mindfulness was taught during RE lessons with each student being in one of 11 classes of the two schools. Six of those classes took normal RE lessons to provide a control group for the study while the other five undertook mindfulness training. Initially the students were required to complete online questionnaires to assess their psychological wellbeing, resilience and reported levels of mindfulness. The measures used include the Warwick



Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale, the Ego Resiliency Scale and the Cognitive Effective Mindfulness Scale revised. Overall, it would seem there was a significant increase in wellbeing among students who received the mindfulness intervention, but of most significance is the fact that those who practised it more regularly reported a greater increase in benefit overall. Subsequent to the delivery of this study, a further expanded eight-week course is being developed and is currently being trialled in a number of state schools around the United Kingdom and other European countries.

## **Mindfulness and nurture**

There have been some concerns voiced by teachers in schools, and also some parents, that mindfulness training could be perceived as focusing on the deficits we perceive children to have inside themselves, for example, supporting a general tendency to label young people as having problems that need fixing. However, this is not the intention of such an intervention or process and the majority of practitioners would certainly not see it as being applied in this way. It is vital that the intervention is not seen as simply part of a therapeutic toolbox. It should be firmly centred within the territory of flourishing and within a whole school approach to positive psychology that builds on strength and builds resilience.

Mindfulness can be seen as an appropriate intervention for use within the nurture group context. Many of our young people who engage in the nurture process and access such provisions will display complex needs alongside significant attachment difficulties or disorders. It is therefore crucial that they are given opportunities to begin to develop the skills they will need to be able to function more appropriately in both social and learning contexts. On presenting such an initiative to school based staff, it is important to highlight some of the key aims and outcomes.

### **Mindfulness with young people and children will hopefully ensure the following:**

- They can balance their emotions and lower stress and anger
- They can practise staying calm and focused on learning in the classroom and therefore further develop their skills in both areas
- They can increase the level of trust they have between themselves and the adults who look after them, and thus make communication easier overall
- They can develop emotional and cognitive understanding and interpersonal awareness and skills
- They can also be taught how to pay attention; we often say 'pay attention' to children but we don't actually teach them how to do this
- They can also become less reactive and more compassionate to others



**Clearly these are all laudable aims and outcomes, and ones we would propose for all children within a nurturing context. These are the children that we want to be able to achieve the following:**

- Better able to focus and concentrate
- Experience increased levels of calm
- Experience decreased levels of stress and anxiety
- Display improved impulse control
- Display increased self-awareness
- Develop natural conflict resolution skills
- Develop more empathy and compassion for others
- Develop and maintain skilful ways to manage difficult emotions

So, how does this fit with our overall objective of building resilience and wellbeing?

### **Building resilience and wellbeing**

As stated previously, mindfulness can also support the development of resilience which is clearly also essential for all children and young people – not just those who are deemed to have been negatively affected by a lack of nurture in the early years. Boosting resilience can inoculate against depression and other mental illnesses and it can also build self-confidence and achievement. Resilient children can resist adversity, cope with uncertainty and recover more successfully from traumatic events or episodes. Psychologists have long recognised that some children develop well despite growing up in high risk environments. This capacity to cope with adversity, and even be strengthened by it, is at the heart of resilience. It is not something that people either have or don't have. Resilience is learnable and teachable and as we learn, we increase the range of strategies available to us when things get difficult.

Resilience theory has been further influenced in recent years by psychologists working in the positive psychology field who adopt the position that all aspects of life need to be embraced, and that coping with risk and challenge are actually good for us. Stress and adversity are something we will all experience and it is therefore essential that children learn how to manage such challenges. As Carol Craig, chief executive of the Centre for Confidence and Wellbeing in Glasgow writes, 'even with the best care, for children and young people the world can be full of adversity' (Craig 2007, p.92). Promoting resilience and the positive sense of self and coping skills that result are clearly an essential within both the social and learning



contexts. Mindfulness approaches can support such an objective as part of a whole school approach at both the individual/group and systems level. It can form one element of such an approach, specifically targeting children who may present as most vulnerable within both the learning and social contexts. It can also be most effective when delivered as part of the Nurture Group curriculum. Hence the development of this programme with the Nurture Group Network who fully endorse the approach as it fits very comfortably with the core principles and values of nurture.

### **The concept of nurture groups**

Nurture groups were originally developed in 1969 in inner London by educational psychologist Marjorie Boxall. Boxall identified that a large number of children entering school were presenting with severe social, emotional and behavioural needs. They were unable to form trusting relationships with adults or to respond appropriately to other children. In effect, they were simply not ready to meet the social and intellectual demands of school life. She found that these problems were directly related to impoverished early nurturing. The main aim of the nurture group intervention was therefore to 'create the world of earliest childhood; building the basic and essential learning experiences normally gained in the first three years of life and to enable children to fully meet their potential in mainstream schools' (Boxall 2002). Nurture groups were originally classrooms in mainstream primary schools where small groups of children with a range of social and emotional difficulties were offered focused support (Bennathan and Boxall 2000). Now nurture groups can be found in primary schools, secondary schools, special schools, care settings and secure units. The key aim of the nurture group provision is to gain an understanding of what lies behind social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (Bennathan 2012) and

to subsequently enable young people to value themselves through the experience of being valued and cared for by others (Cefai and Cooper 2009).





## Theoretical underpinning

Underpinning the development of nurture groups was the recognition that children who displayed social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the early years were generally exhibiting behaviours consistent with children of a younger chronological age – both socially and in the area of cognitive development. For Boxall (2002) the focus of a nurture group should therefore be building early attachments and the recreation of child interactions in early care. Boxall outlines the main principles that underpin the nurture group approach as follows:

- Children's learning is understood and responded to developmentally
- The classroom offers a safe and predictable environment where adults are reliable and set firm boundaries
- The importance of nurture for self-esteem is promoted
- The group addresses the issue that language is a key tool for communication and not just a skill to be learned
- A recognition and understanding that all behaviour is a means of communication.

## What is a nurture group?

In effect a nurture group is inclusive early intervention and prevention for the development of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within a mainstream setting. It is also a provision in which the day is one of carefully structured routines providing a balance of learning, teaching, affection and structure within a homelike environment. It is also a group in which children are placed, not due to their limitations with regards to ability, but simply because they have missed out on early experiences that promote good development, particularly in the areas of social, emotional and behavioural skills. Nurture groups offer a context and model of relationships to children who have been missing out, or who have insufficiently internalised essential early learning experiences. They are generally a within-school resource, staffed by two adults for up to 10 children, and offer short or medium term placements where the children attend regularly. They usually fully return to their mainstream classroom within two to four terms. Nurture groups do not in any sense stigmatise the children who attend, since the intervention is planned as part of a whole school approach to supporting children. In fact, the children have strong links with their mainstream class; for example registering in the morning, attending selective activities, and spending social time in lunchtimes with their classroom peer group. The nurture group takes place within the nurture room which aims to provide a secure, dependable environment to meet the different needs of each child. There is a strong focus on supporting positive



emotional and social growth and cognitive development at the level of the individual child by responding to each child in a developmentally appropriate way.

**The guiding principles of any nurture group are as follows:**

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The nurture group class offers a secure base
3. Nurture is important for self-esteem
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. Transition is important in children's lives

**Setting up a nurture group room**

The room is intended as an educational setting but clearly includes the elements of a secure and supportive home. Alongside the normal classroom furniture there are comfortable chairs and sofas, a cooking area and a large mirror. The room should ideally have four or five areas: a kitchen area, a dining area, a role play area and a quiet area. All these will be appropriately resourced, while supplementary resources may also include:

- A small writing or book making corner
- A listening station which is valuable when children want to listen to story tapes or simply record their own stories, thoughts and feelings and share them later if they so desire
- Sand and water areas
- Dolls, pushchair or buggy
- Train sets and play bricks

**The majority of nurture group sessions are likely to be approximately two hours long and it is clearly more practical, in terms of the school timetable, to ensure that times remain consistent throughout the year.**

- **For the first half hour of the session the children engage in free play.** They can access a range of activities at this time and it is an ideal opportunity for staff to observe the children's learning and development of social and emotional skills. Table top and floor activities can be set up to cover each area of learning. are when the children engage in group time. One member of staff will lead the group while the other becomes a member of the group, providing a role model for the children. Activities in this session may include the following:



- Days of the week
- Weather
- Finding name cards
- Choosing a special helper
- Playing a short game linked to number or letter recognition
- Playing the 'bag' game (see below).
- **The next 30 minutes are for toast time.** A special helper helps prepare and serve the toast and drinks to the peer group. During this time, both the adults and the children sit down together at the table; this enables the adults to model social conversation and engage in any problem-solving regarding a current issue that may have arisen within the group.
- **The next part of the session involves focused teaching.** One member of staff will carry out focused teaching tasks with individual children. Each child will try to complete the task during this time, either in a one-to-one or small group context. This enables the other member of staff to interact with other children in their play while these activities are being implemented.
- **The final part of the nurture group session is that of story time where one member of the staff reads a story to the group as a whole while the other becomes part of the group once again.** This enables them to model appropriate behaviour, listening skills, etc, and also support the children's enjoyment, learning and development of language skills.

## **A growing evidence base for nurture with mindfulness**

Research has shown us that nurture groups in primary schools can foster and maintain educational engagement (Cooper and Tiknaz 2007). They have also been shown to effectively remove a variety of barriers to learning including aggressive behaviour, temper tantrums and withdrawn behaviour (Bishop 2008). Alongside this evidence base, a range of government reports have also shown that nurture groups within the primary phase are also effective in reducing school exclusions (Ofsted 2011; Ofsted 2009; Estyn 2007). It therefore seems entirely logical to suggest that mindfulness activities and approaches are also now delivered within the context of such an evidence-based intervention that truly ensures the inclusion of some of our most vulnerable and complex children and young people.



## **Delivering the activities within the nurture group**

There are 60 suggested activities that can be presented on individual cards for ease of use. These are relatively straightforward in terms of delivery and organisation and are arranged under three key headings:

- **Thinking and breathing**
- **Thinking and moving**
- **Thinking and recording**

The first section focuses on introducing key concepts of mindfulness that involve thinking and observing and regulating thoughts and emotions. The second part introduces a range of activities that involve movement and physical control while the final part focuses on recording mindful behaviours in both words and pictures. The cards are presented in order with introductory activities first and those that require a greater skill level towards the end. However, it is not prescriptive and there is obviously flexibility here for the teacher/support staff to adjust the running order to suit the particular needs of the group they are supporting.

It is clearly essential that the nurture group staff arrange for the context to be as appropriate as possible, ie providing and reinforcing the need for a quiet space and time, and also allocating special mats or places in the room to engage in the majority of these activities.

It would also be useful at the outset for staff to introduce the concept of mindfulness. For this purpose Appendix 1 provides practitioners with an information sheet for parents and teachers. It will also be useful to introduce the idea of mindfulness to the children by describing how mindfulness may work for them. Staff can explain that all the children will engage in activities that will help them to learn more about themselves and each other. The 60 Mindful Minutes programme will support them in terms of teaching them new skills they can use every day. These are the kinds of skills that will help them for the rest of their lives.

Mindfulness can be introduced as an intervention that focuses on developing attention skills. The children and young people will be asked to pay attention to each and every moment, not to make any judgements about those moments and also to be able to accept themselves for simply being the people that they are. Stopping and being still and thinking and noticing what is going on are body experiences and how we think and respond to those thoughts is something that will help all of us in both the short and longer terms. Staff can explain to the



children and young people that it is possible to allow themselves to have feelings without allowing those feelings to overcome them.

Mindfulness, as taught in this programme, will ultimately help them to relax more and to remain calm when things go wrong or they begin to get stressed. The processes will also encourage the children and young people to show themselves compassion and tolerance and not to constantly compare themselves to other people. It is this kind of behaviour that generally leads us to feel very unhappy with both ourselves and our lives in general. The staff can explain to the children and young people they will be playing lots of games and engaging in activities that will help them learn about themselves and each other. For example, they will play games to help them become more aware of physical sensations, thoughts and feelings. They will be taught how to slow down, to focus on their breathing and to be able to simply accept a thought, recognise it, and then let it go without making any judgement about it. They will have a time every day in the nurture group where they will spend a few mindful minutes engaging in the activities on the 60 cards in the pack. However, Appendix 2 also provides them with a format for recording their own mindfulness activities and practice in both the school and the home context. This will be useful for the children to generalise the practice into other contexts and also become more skilled in terms of practising mindfulness independently of adult support.

It is hoped that this resource will prove to be extremely effective and useful within the context of the nurture group. We all want to ensure the development of children and young people who can engage in healthy social relationships; who can pay attention in the school and learning contexts; who can manage their anxiety; who can build their capacity to memorise and self-manage and understand themselves, and also who can relax as and when it is appropriate to do so. Overall, the key aim here is to promote the wellbeing of all children – not simply those who have additional or complex needs. I feel very strongly that mindfulness is a powerful means of ensuring children and young people remain well, keeping their minds clear of thoughts so they can focus on what is happening now without being distracted. This in turn means they can become more aware of their thoughts and in so doing find it easier to accept their thoughts just as thoughts, letting them go and knowing that they don't have to be ruled by them. Paying attention to the present moment, being content within that moment and feeling aware of the all the good things in our lives are surely elements that will ultimately ensure greater levels of happiness and wellbeing.



As Donella H Meadows says:

*Suppose we went at a slow enough pace...to feel our bodies, play with children, look openly without agenda or timetable into the faces of loved ones...Suppose we took time each day to sit in silence. I think if we did those things, the world wouldn't need much saving.*





## References

- Baer, R. A. & Krietemeyer, J.** (2006)  
Overview of mindfulness and acceptance based treatment approaches. In R. A. Baer (Ed.), *Mindfulness-based treatment approaches: Clinician's guide to evidence base and applications*. Burlington: Academic Press
- Baer, R. A.** (2006)  
*Mindfulness-based treatment approaches: Clinician's guide to evidence base and applications*. Burlington: Academic Press
- Baer, R. A.** (2003)  
Mindfulness training as a clinical intervention: A conceptual and empirical review. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10, 125-143
- Bennathan, M., and Boxall, M.** (2000)  
*Effective Intervention in Primary Schools: Nurture Groups* Fulton: David Fulton Publishers
- Bennathan, M. and Boxall, M.** (2000)  
*Effective Intervention in Primary Schools*. (2nd edition). London: David Fulton Publishers
- Birnbaum, L.** (2005)  
Adolescent Aggression and Differentiation of Self: Guided Mindfulness Meditation in the Service of Individuation. *The Scientific World Journal*, 5, 478-489
- Bishop, S. R.** (2002)  
What do we really know about mindfulness-based stress reduction? *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 64, 71-84
- Bishop, S. R., Lau, M., Shapiro, S., Carlson, L., Anderson, N. D., Carmody, J. et al.** (2004)  
Mindfulness: A proposed operational definition. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 11, 230-241
- Bogels, S., Hoogstad, B., van Dun, L., De Shutter, S., & Restifo, K.** (2008)  
Mindfulness training for adolescents with externalising disorders and their parents. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 36, 193-209
- Boxall, M.** (2002)  
*Nurture Groups in Schools: Principles and Practice* Sage/Paul Chapman
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M.** (2003)  
The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological wellbeing. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 84, 4, 822-848
- Burke, C. A.** (2010)  
*Mindfulness-Based Approaches with Children and Adolescents: A Preliminary Review of Current Research in an Emergent Field*. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 19, 133-144
- Burnett, R.** (2009)  
*Mindfulness in Schools: Learning lessons from the adults – secular and Buddhist*.  
[http://mindfulnessinschools.org/images/stories/keyDocuments/Mindfulness\\_inSchools\\_Burnett.pdf](http://mindfulnessinschools.org/images/stories/keyDocuments/Mindfulness_inSchools_Burnett.pdf)
- Carmody, J., & Baer, R. A.** (2008) Relationships between mindfulness practice and levels of mindfulness, medical and psychological symptoms, and well-being in a mindfulness-based stress reduction program. *Journal of Behavioural Medicine*, 31, 23-33
- Cefai, C. and Cooper, P.** 2009.  
*Promoting Emotional Education. Engaging Children and Young People with Social, Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Centre for Mindfulness.** (2011)  
University of Massachusetts Medical School.  
<http://www.umasmc.edu/cfm/index.aspx>



**Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice.** (2011)

University of Wales, Bangor.

<http://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness>

**Cooper, P. and Tknaz, Y.** 2007.

Nurture Groups in School and at Home. Connecting with children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

**Craig, C.** (2007)

Creating Confidence: A Handbook for Professionals Working with Young People. Glasgow: The Centre for Confidence and Wellbeing

**Crane, R.** (2010)

Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy. Routledge: London

**Dumas, J. E.** (2005)

Mindfulness-Based Parent Training: Strategies to Lessen the Grip of Automaticity in Families with Disruptive Children. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 34, 4, 779-791

**Estyn Report** 2007.

Evaluation of the implementation by schools and local education authorities of guidance on exclusions. Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training (Wales)

**Flook, L., Smalley, S. L., Kitil, M.J., Galla, B. M., Kasier-Greenleand, S., Locke, J.,**

**Ishijima, E., & Kasari, C.** (2010)  
Effects of Mindful Awareness Practices on Executive Functions in Elementary School Children. *Journal of Applied School Psychology* 26, 1, 70-95

**Fredrickson, B.** (2009)

Positivity – Groundbreaking Research to release your inner optimist and thrive. Oxford: One World

**Garrison Institute Report** (2005) Contemplation and Education. A Survey of Programs Using Contemplative Techniques in K-12 Educational Settings: A Mapping Report. Garrison Institute: New York

**Greeson, J. M.** (2009)

Mindfulness Research Update 2008 *Complementary Health Practice Review* 14(1), 10-18

**Grossman, P., Niemann, L., Schmidt, S., & Walach, H.** (2004)

Mindfulness-based stress reduction and health benefits: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 57, 35-43

**Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K., & Wilson, K. G.** (1999)

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. New York: Guildford Press

**Hooker, K. El, & Fodor, I. E.** (2008) Teaching Mindfulness to Children. *Gestalt Review* 12, 1, 75-91

**Huppert, F. A., & Johnson, D. M.** (2010)

A controlled trial of mindfulness training schools: The importance of practice for an impact on wellbeing. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 5, 4, 264-274

**Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T.** (2009)

The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research* 79, 1, 491-525

**Kabat-Zinn, J.** (1990)

Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain and Illness. New York: Delacorte

**Kabat-Zinn, J.** (1996)

Full Catastrophe Living: How to Cope with Stress, Pain and Illness Using Mindfulness Meditation. London: Piatkus Books

**Kabat-Zinn, J.** (2003)

Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10, 144-156

**Linehan, M. M.** (1993)

Cognitive-behavioural treatment of borderline personality disorder. New York: Guildford Press.



**Lozar-Glenn, J. M.** (2010)

The Garrison Institute: Bringing Mindfulness to Education Business Education Forum, April, 11-12

**McCready, L. T., & Soloway, G. B.** (2010)

Teachers' perceptions of challenging student behaviours in model inner city schools. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties* 15, 2, 111-123

**National Institute of Clinical Excellence** (2009)

Depression The treatment and management of depression in adults  
<http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/pdf/CG90NICeguideline.pdf>

**Napoli, M., Krech, P. R., & Holley, L. C.** (2005)

Mindfulness training for elementary school students: The attention academy. *Journal of Applied School Psychology*, 21, 99-125

**Nyanaponika, T.** (1972)

The power of mindfulness. San Francisco, CA: Unity Press

**Ofsted** 2009.

The exclusion from school of children aged four to seven. London: Ofsted

**Ofsted** 2011.

Supporting children with challenging behaviour through a nurture group approach.  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/supporting-children-challenging-behaviour-through-nurture-group-approach](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/supporting-children-challenging-behaviour-through-nurture-group-approach)

**Saltzman, A.** (2010)

Mindfulness: A Guide for Teachers  
<http://www.stillquietplace.com>

**Segal, Z., Williams, J. & Teasdale, J.** (2002)

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression: A New Approach to Preventing Relapse. New York: Guilford Press

**Semple, R. J., Lee, J., Miller, L. F.** (2006)

Mindfulness based cognitive therapy of children. In R. A. Baer (Ed.), *Mindfulness-based treatment approaches: Clinician's guide to evidence base and applications*. Burlington: Academic Press

**Semple, R. J., Reid, E. F. G., & Miller, L.** (2005)

Treating anxiety with mindfulness: An open trial of mindfulness training for anxious children. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 19, 379-392

**Shapiro, S. L., Carlson, L. E., Astin, J. A., & Freedman, B.** (2006)

*Mechanisms of mindfulness*. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 62, 373-390

**Thompson, M., & Gauntlett-Gilbert, J.** (2008)

Mindfulness with children and adolescents: Effective clinical application. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 13, 395-407

**Visa-Petra, L., Cheie, L., Benga, O. & Miclea, M.** (2011)

Cognitive control goes to school *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 11, 240-244

**Wagner, E. E., Rathus, J. H., & Miller, A. L.** (2006)

Mindfulness in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) for Adolescents. In R. A. Baer (Ed.), *Mindfulness-based treatment approaches: Clinician's guide to evidence base and applications*. Burlington: Academic Press

**Weare, K.** (2010)

Mindfulness, the missing piece for SEL? Business update <http://www.social-emotional-learning-update.com>

**Williams, M.** (2008)

Foreword. In Crane, R., (2010) *Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy*. Routledge: London



## Appendix 1

# Info sheet for parents and teachers

### An introduction

Mindfulness is an approach that aims to further develop children's life skills by helping them self-regulate and self-calm, pay attention to themselves and the world they live in and to effectively reflect on their actions and relationships.

### Mindfulness has been described as:

"The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose through the present moment non-judgementally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment." (Kabat-Zinn)

### The key aims of mindfulness – these are to develop the following:

- **Attention** – awareness of emotions, thoughts, feelings and greater concentration
- **Balance** – time for you, time for family and friends, time for school and studying
- **Compassion** – self-acceptance, non-judgemental

### Who is this for?

This approach can be used with all adults and children to increase self-awareness and support us in managing daily life as well as stressful events. Mindfulness can help to support the following:

- **Attention**
- **Social relationships**
- **Anxiety**
- **Memory**
- **Self-management**
- **Self-understanding**
- **Relaxation**

### Outline of mindfulness in the nurture group

This intervention can teach young people new skills they can use every day and that will ensure they develop wellbeing skills and strategies in the future. Mindfulness is about learning to pay attention to each and every moment, be non-judgemental and accept who you are.

The purpose of the intervention is to develop a practice of mindfulness, to better understand ourselves and to allow ourselves to have feelings without allowing the feelings to control us and our actions. Mindfulness aims to help young people to relax, to remain calm, to give themselves compassion and to not constantly compare themselves with others, the latter being a sure source of unhappiness.

We will play lots of games to learn about ourselves and each other; for example, games to help us become more aware of physical sensations, thoughts and feelings, to slow down, to focus on breathing, or simply to be able to accept a thought, then to let it go.

We will practise activities from our 60 Mindful Minutes programme every day. Sometimes these will last for two to three minutes and sometimes they may last for 10. What is important to remember is that the more we practise, the better our skills become.

### Reinforcing skills at home

The children and young people can practise mindful activities in a range of contexts – including at home. For this purpose, they will be provided with a Mindfulness Record on which they can record their own mindful minutes and reflect on how effective these are in terms of maintaining overall wellbeing.



## Appendix 2

# Mindfulness Record

Please try to practise the mindful activities we use in the nurture group as often as you can. For example, spending a few minutes each day practising breathing exercises will help them become part of your normal everyday routine.

Note down in the chart what activity you tried, when you tried it and how it felt, what thoughts or feelings you had and perhaps you could also give it a score out of five.

You can try these activities at both home and school and then feed back to your teacher in the nurture group at the end of each week.





# Nurture groups

- Offer a short-term, inclusive, focused intervention
- Empower staff, children and young people and their parents/carers
- Intervene early, preventing later problems
- Raise attainment, attendance and self-confidence
- Use evidence-based practices
- Are cost effective
- Are endorsed by Ofsted, HMIE and Estyn
- Address legislative requirements
- Are recommended as effective practice in numerous government documents
- Are underpinned by attachment theory and neuroscience
- Are non-judgemental

The Nurture Group Network promotes the development of nurture groups and provides accredited training for teachers and other staff so they can run their own nurture groups in their schools.

## Can we help you and your children and young people?

To find out or for more information call The Nurture Group Network on **020 3475 8980**, check our website to see what teachers, parents and children have to say about nurture groups, or email us at **info@nurturegroups.org**

Membership of The Nurture Group Network, which is open to everyone, provides a range of services to individuals and schools to support their work with children and young people including accredited training, research, publications and information exchange.



UK registered charity number: 1115972. Scottish registered charity number: SC042703

e. [info@nurturegroups.org](mailto:info@nurturegroups.org)

 [@nurturegroups](https://twitter.com/nurturegroups)

[www.nurturegroups.org](http://www.nurturegroups.org)

18A Victoria Park Square,  
Bethnal Green,  
London E2 9PB

# 60 Mindful Minutes



© Copyright 2014 The Nurture Group Network

[www.nurturegroups.org](http://www.nurturegroups.org)

The nurture  
group network ®  
helping children and young people to succeed