

# Mindfulness

## FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

### Helping Children Manage Stress During the COVID-19 Crisis

Schools, community organizations, and public gathering places throughout Los Angeles County are experiencing closures due to coronavirus (COVID-19). If you are a parent or caregiver, you may be concerned about how your child has been impacted by the news and sudden changes in their daily lives. There are several things you can do to help your child feel calm and secure during these difficult and uncertain times.

#### Talking with Your Child About COVID-19

Children worry more when they are kept uninformed. Discussing COVID-19 allows you to educate your child and reassure them that everyone is doing their best to keep each other safe. Here are some tips for talking to your child about COVID-19. These tips were compiled from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE).

- **Remain calm and reassuring.** Children notice when the adults in their lives are feeling anxious and will base their responses on how their parent or caregiver is responding
- **Make yourself available.** Let your child know that they can come to you with any worries or questions they may have.
- **Avoid blaming others.** Viruses can make anyone sick, regardless of a person's race or ethnicity. Avoid making assumptions about who might have COVID-19.
- **Monitor media consumption.** Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.
- **Give honest and accurate information.** Let children know that some of what they've heard may be based on rumors. Provide truthful information that is appropriate for their age and developmental level. Accurate information can be found at the Centers for Disease Control website: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)
- **Give them power.** Making children responsible for doing their part to stay safe and healthy gives them a sense of control which is empowering and builds resilience.



## Practice Calming Mindfulness Techniques with Kids and Teens

We're often told to remain calm when dealing with stressful situations. The practice of mindfulness is a very effective way to create calm within ourselves. There are fun and easy ways to practice mindfulness with children. Here are just a few suggestions to get started:

- **Listening exercise.** An easy way for children to practice mindfulness is to focus their attention on listening to what they can hear. Turn off all devices and create a quiet moment to focus on the sounds around you.
- **Breathing buddy.** Find a stuffed animal and have the child lie down on their back with the buddy on their belly. Ask the child to focus their attention on the rise and fall of the stuffed animal as they breathe in and out.
- **Mindful walks.** Next time you take your child on a walk, ask them to notice what they see and smell. Spend one full minute not talking while they focus on the what they hear. After the minute has passed, share what sounds you noticed.
- **Gratitude practice.** Family mealtime is a great opportunity to share one thing, no matter how simple, that you're grateful for each day.

More free mindfulness activities for kids are also available from the early learning research center Waterford: [www.waterford.org/resources/mindfulness-activities-for-kids/](http://www.waterford.org/resources/mindfulness-activities-for-kids/)

## Additional Resources

**Los Angeles Unified School District:** Find out where to get free meals for students during the temporary closure of schools. Access free online learning resources for students K-12. [achieve.lausd.net/resources](http://achieve.lausd.net/resources)

**Los Angeles County Office of Education:** This 3 minute video provides simple strategies for discussing Coronavirus with children. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfAc9euPHJY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfAc9euPHJY)

**World Health Organization:** Helping Children Cope with Stress during the COVID-19 Outbreak. This is a one page, printable document with 5 useful tips to help ease your child's worries. [www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronavirus/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff\\_2](http://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronavirus/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2)

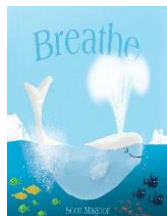
**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** Strategies for parents and caregivers to help children and teens manage stress and anxiety amid the pandemic. [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html)

**Ready Rosie's Healthy at Home:** A free toolkit for supporting families impacted by COVID-19. <https://readyrosie.com/en/healthyathome/>

## DIGITAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH LA COUNTY LIBRARY

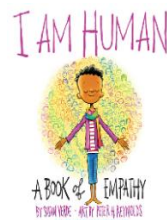
### eBooks & Audiobooks

LA County Library offers numerous resources that can help you and your child learn more about mindfulness and managing stress. Here are just a few, all of which are available as eBooks on [OverDrive and Libby](#):



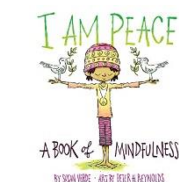
#### ***Breathe* by Scott Magoon**

This lovely picture book introduces the ideas of intention and mindfulness through the story of a young whale on a journey of discovery.



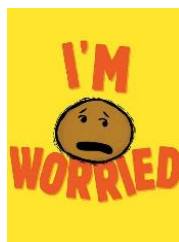
#### ***I am Human* by Susan Verde**

This picture book is a celebration of empathy and compassion that lifts up the flawed fullness of humanity and encourages children to see themselves as part of one big imperfect family—millions strong.



#### ***I am Peace, A book of Mindfulness* by Susan Verde**

When the world feels chaotic, find peace within through an accessible mindfulness practice. I Am Peace will help readers of all ages feel grounded and restored.



#### ***I'm Worried* by Michael Ian Black**

Potato is worried. About *everything*. Because *anything* might happen. One thing Potato's friends can promise is that no matter what happens...they will always be by his side.