



Moodies Early Education Pack

Led by Rachael Coopes, Moodies identifies big emotions in little people. It encourages children to embrace their emotions by moving and responding with their bodies. It brings to life different emotions through simple, engaging line drawn animations. Inspired by the powerful research around the benefits of practicing mindfulness and emotional intelligence in kids, it guides the audience to name and understand emotions in different ways.

Mini Productions' Rachael Coopes and Natasha Pizzica are storytellers who believe in making engaging content, centred around wellbeing, for young audiences that inspires and entertains.

About Rachael

Rachael is an award-winning writer, actor, Play School presenter and yoga teacher - but fundamentally, she is a storyteller. In her 20-year career, she has written and performed in film, television and theatre in Australia, the UK and the US. She's developed engaging television for kids and written award-winning theatre for the complex brains of teenagers.



About Natasha

Natasha comes from an education and creative background, studying a Bachelor of Creative Industries majoring in Drama and a Bachelor of Secondary Education. Natasha worked in theatre for many years co-creating highly acclaimed theatre company Dead Puppet Society. Now an award-winning television producer, Natasha is passionate about creating entertaining content for all viewers, she believes that content can create change!

Why create Moodies?

Mini Productions have been dedicated to creating fun, engaging, content for kids, with an emphasis on wellbeing and mindfulness. There has been a lot of conversation around the importance of mindfulness for kids and amazing resources are emerging in certain areas. However one identified gap was the big world of feelings - particularly given the challenging emotional effects of COVID times. Even the simple act of identifying big emotions can make them feel less overwhelming or scary. Studies have shown that emotional intelligence is integral to success in all areas of life, at all stages.



Moodies aims to:

- Help children to identify emotions (this assists in choosing how to respond to situations, communicate how they are feeling and build the capacity to empathise.
- Provide **practical techniques** and tools for children to use for some of the more challenging feelings (empowering management of emotions).
- Encourage children to share their feelings.
- Foster discussion with parents and caregivers about feelings.
- Validate all feelings.
- Explore how it feels in our bodies and heads to feel different emotions
- Build understandings about how people may respond differently to different feelings.
- Help children to understand emotion-behaviour links e.g. I may feel very angry and like I want to shout at everyone, but underneath it I'm actually very tired because I went to bed very late and woke up early. Or I threw my toys across the room because I felt so angry, I can feel angry- that's ok, but throwing toys is not ok, so how do I manage that big feeling?

An introduction to emotional literacy and mindfulness by Dr Ben Deery from the University of Melbourne.

Emotional literacy and mindfulness helps children (and adults!) to identify, recognise, and to act on or respond to big feelings and behaviours. In an infant or toddler this can be expressing an emotion with their face or body and seeking an adult to show or share this feeling. In young children this may begin as recognising and labelling basic emotions, while in somewhat older children they may be able to recognise and name emotions and linked behaviours or situations that caused them. As we get even older, we can start to notice the environments and factors that may impact our emotions and behaviour, how our emotions and behaviour may impact others, and even analyse how our emotions and thoughts can affect our decision making and responsible choices.

Research shows children with stronger social-emotional skills can manage conflicts better, persist longer to achieve a goal or solve a problem, and learn more effectively in the classroom. Studies even suggest children with stronger self-regulation and social-emotional skills in childhood grow up to be more well-adjusted as adults, are healthier, wealthier, stay in education longer, and show better mental health. Using mindfulness to develop and build on children's knowledge about the connection between their brain, mind, and body is a great way to build their emotional literacy leading to better short and long-term outcomes.

One major aspect of mindfulness and emotional literacy for children is for them to gently and enjoyably connect sensations in their body with emotions, feelings, and thoughts in their heads. Learning to accurately label and name these emotions and the sensations that are linked to them is a critical skill to learn. Treating all emotions as being valid and having their own strengths and weakness, helps children not to feel ashamed or hide their emotions, but gives them a chance to examine, reflect on, and change their responses to them and behaviour. *Mindful breathing* is a great tool for children to use and learn about, as it helps to draw their attention and behaviour from their emotion to their breathing, a grounding sensation that often goes unaware. This type of breathing can help children to slowly reconnect their problem-solving skills and self-regulation to what was happening and to the emotions at hand, meaning they may be more able to respond thoughtfully to the situation rather than act on 'auto-pilot'.

Moodies is available on available on ABC iview or the ABC Kids App https://iview.abc.net.au/show/moodies



Tips for Adults & Educators

Mindfulness for young children will look very different to mindfulness for teenagers and adults. This resource details a variety of different activities, as some will stick with certain ages and preferences, while others may not. **Keep it short** (at least to begin with – and build up over time if your child wants to), **keep it sensory**, **keep it simple**, and most of all – **keep it fun!**

Adult life can also be stressful, fast-paced, and full of big feelings, so **try to do and practice as many of these mindfulness activities with a child as you can**, it is a great way to build resilience for adults as well children. Once your child becomes familiar with some of these activities, ask them to lead them while you follow their instructions – this not only helps them to understand the concepts at a deeper level, but means **you get a dose of mindfulness as well!**

Ideas to extend on 'Moodies' in classrooms and

Breathing Ball

A 'breathing ball' also referred to as a 'hoberman spheres' is a great way to practice mindful breathing with your child or a larger group of children. They can commonly be found at discount shops, toy stores, or online, If you can't find one, ask your child to imagine they are holding one in their hands, and bring their hands out wide when they breath in, and contract the imaginary ball inwards as they breath out. NB: The breathing speed should be at a fairly natural but slightly slower than normal speed. Too fast can miss the calming impact, too slow can also be somewhat discomforting or tightening.



Silly

Emotion card guessing game

Make a set of feeling / expression cards. Draw a picture of a feeling on each one and write the name of the feeling on the other side. Children can play a guessing game by choosing a card, then acting out the feeling with their face and body. Play in partners so the other child can guess what the feeling is.



Using a favourite soft toy (with a bit of weight is good), a plastic bath boat, or after making a large 'pet rock', place the preferred object on your child's tummy and try to get them to notice both visually and by touch, how the object moves up and down as they breath. You can suggest to your child that a nice calm and slow rate of breathing might even put the toy, pet rock, or people in the boat, to sleep! This activity can be down anytime, but can be great as part of bath-time fun or getting ready for bed.



Sad

Make a 'Body-Brain' Remote

Using empty cardboard boxes and loose parts like bottle tops and craft supplies, get your child to make a 'remote control' for their body and brain. Practice using the remote to control body movements, actions, feelings, and breathing! Over time you could add different 'dials' and 'controls' to the remote e.g., speed dials, weather dials (stormy, raining, sunny), temperature dials, a 'pause' button. Buying a 'giant/big button remote' from a department store (often used by the aged or visually impaired) is another fun alternative to use in a similar way, or simply get your child to draw their 'Body-Brain' remote using colourful textures and/or pencils.



Brave



Shutting your 'Robot-body' down

Another great activity for bath-time fun or getting ready for bed or a rest, is to get your child to pretend they are a robot, and using a remote control (NB: can use use craft-made remote or giant remote from above) start to pretend to "shut-down" your child-robot's body, beginning with their feet/legs, moving up the body, arms/hands, before getting to the face/brain. Ask the 'robot' if they can feel or notice any 'electricity' still in that body part after it has been shutdown. As your child gets better with this activity, you can get more specific and detailed with shutting down the robot-body parts (e.g., toes, fingers, noses, ears).

E-motional Charades

Using a store bought game of charades or making up your own cards found online, eventually add in a second set of emotion cards or an emotional 'spinner' (featuring a list of basic emotions to begin with, and maybe more complex emotions as your child gets better at the game). The aim of the game is to then act out, for example, the object (something you can touch), action (something you do), or animal but adding in the emotion to the guessing also. Kids will enjoy this tricky addition as they act out an angry duck or brushing their teeth happily!

Make a 'slow down' jar/'Mind jar'

Using a recycled jar or glass water bottle arrange a variety of coloured glitter/glitter glues. Going through various emotions and feelings that your child can identify, choose a glitter colour for it and put that in the jar. Fill jar completely with water and screw lid on tightly (NB. superglue or a glue gun can be used to seal lid). Then discuss with your child that sometimes our thoughts and emotions may start to rush around in our head, be it excited feelings, angry feelings, any big feelings, but if we watch them like in the jar (and maybe do some mindful breathing), eventually they start to slow and eventually settle down. Discuss it's ok if our feelings and thoughts are still there, we are not trying to get rid of them, but watching them and knowing eventually they will slow/settle down can help.

What does that 'look' like?

Using a simple line drawing of a body found online, you can ask your child to identify and draw how certain emotions look and feel in their body – e.g., where do feel anger – in your hands, your tummy, your face – is it red or green – is it messy or sharp, or radiating outwards. Across a number of days or weeks you can do this for many different 'big' emotions.

Listening to different types and forms of music, you and your child can also draw or paint on a piece of paper what that music would "look like" if you could see it! Is it slow, wavy, sharp, red, green, does it have a shape, a way of moving across the page. You could also use the body outline from above or an outline of your brain/mind on the page, and draw how the music makes your body or mind feel. NB: the soundtrack to the movie, Fantasia, is a great place to start for emotive music. Many versions of the songs may be found freely online.



Lonely



Happy



Angry



Anxious



Story Books

Emotions

- The colour monster by Anna Llenas
- In my heart by Jo Witek & Christine Roussey
- Feelings by Richard Jones & Libby Walden
- My many coloured days by Dr. Seuss, Steve Johnson & Lou Fancher

Noticing & Awareness

- The sloth who came to stay by Margaret Wild & Vivienne To
- The listening walk by Paul Showers & Aliki
- The noisy paint box by Barb Rosenstock & Mary GrandPre Planet Kindergarten (school) by Sue Ganz-Schmitt & Shane Prigmore
- It's Hard to Be Five (6,7,8) Learning How to Work My Control Panel by Jamie Lee Curtis & Laura Connel

About Your Brain & Body

- Your fantastic Elastic brain by JoAnn Deak & Sarah Ackerley
- Hey warrior by Karen Young
- This book is out of control by Richard Byrne
- Power Down, Little Robot by Anna Staniszewski & Tim Zeltner

Different/New Perspectives

- Here we are, Notes for living on planet earth by Oliver Jeffers (also now a feature animation)
- They all saw a cat by Brendan Wenzel
- Duck! Rabbit! by Amy Krouse Rosenthal & Tom Lichtenheld
 The true story of the three little pigs by Jon Scieszka & Lane Smith

Curiosity & Waiting

- The Golden Egg Book by Margaret Wise Brown & Leonard Weisgard
- Waiting is not easy! by Mo Willems
- How did that get in my lunchbox by Chris Butterworth & Lucia Gaggiotti
- Du Iz Tak? by Carson Ellis



Kind







Further Mindfulness and Emotional Literacy resources for Families & Educators

The <u>Play School 'Mindfully Me'</u> episode. Available on iview ABC or the ABC Kids app. <u>Notes for Educators and Families</u> also available.

Queensland Brain Institute (QBI) - The BRAIN Activity Booklet for kids.

'Stop, Breathe & Think' Mindfulness <u>program for children</u> and for membership <u>information for teachers</u>. (free membership for teachers)

'MindUp' Mindfulness-based free resources and activities for families and children.

<u>Tuning into Kids Programs</u> – for Professionals and Parents/Carers

Zero to Three, Getting Started with Mindfulness: A Toolkit for Early Childhood Organisations.

ABC Catalyst - The Science of Meditation

Emerging Minds & Raising Children's Network

App & Web-based Mindfulness examples (to complement activities by parents/educators)

Stop, Breathe, Think (SBT) Kids

SBT For Educators

Mind Yeti (Free on YouTube, Vimeo, Spotify, iTunes)

Insight Timer, Meditation for Kids

