Mini Mindful Me!

Young children are naturally curious. When you see a child absorbed in play they are being mini mindful masters! Mindfulness is about being ‘in the moment’ and focusing completely on what you are currently doing. It can be a great way to help children learn to pause and think before reacting.

Here is an activity that involves a burst of energy and a bit of curiosity.

Ask the children to stand up and either jump up and down or run on the spot for one minute. At the end of that minute, ask them to place their hands on their heart and focus on how their heartbeat and breathing feels.

Allow them to take this moment (1-2 minutes or as long as they can manage) just to focus on this one thing… feeling the heartbeat and breathing.  Ask the children, what they notice about their heart and breathing. After a few minutes, ask them what they noticed:

* Did their body feel different as the heart and breathing slowed down?
* How do they feel now?

You could suggest the word 'calm' if they are struggling to explain it .The main thing is that they are thinking about how they are feeling.

This takes practice and for some young children, staying still or quiet can be too much of a challenge. The main thing is not to force it. You may be able to increase the mindful part as the children get used to the activity. Be aware though that there is no ‘wrong’ way to do this. Even simply sitting and noticing our breathing for a few minutes (or even a few seconds, for a person who’s usually very active) has a calming effect on the brain and body. Come back to this as often as you like (perhaps once a day).

Congratulate the children for taking this time to allow their body and brain to be still.

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