

# THE SUMMER MINDFULNESS CHALLENGE

## Week 5 – Back to School

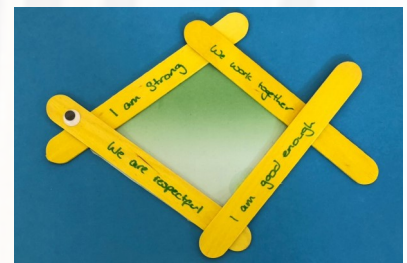
This week my thoughts turn to children going back to school. So all the activities this week are ones that will help anyone who is feeling a little anxious about the term starting or who struggles a little with a change in routine. I hope you enjoy them!

### *Mindful Walk*

Whilst it can be useful to have a space to talk about school, the morning of the first day back is not always the most helpful time. Keep your child in the present moment by doing the 5-senses activity on the way to school. As they are travelling they need to identify: 5 things they can see, 4 things they can feel, 3 things they can hear, 2 things they can smell and one thing to taste.

### *Affirmations*

Positive affirmations are a great way to build self-confidence and self-esteem. There are plenty of affirmation cards available online or you can make your own. Be as creative as you like, perhaps buy some lollipop sticks, write on your affirmations and pop them in a jar. Choose one to read out loud each morning. Remember, affirmations should be short, positive and in the present tense.



### *Muscle Relaxation*

Progressive muscle relaxations are perfect to help get rid of all the stress from the body and to help with going to sleep. There are plenty of scripts online, but one way to do this is to encourage your child to lie comfortably in bed, then starting at the toes, say 'goodnight' to each part of the body: the toes, calves, knees and thighs, bottom, back, tummy and chest. Fingers, hands and arms, then the chin, cheeks, eyes and forehead. For younger children you could gently tap or press each part of the body as you say it to help bring their attention there. The exercise should take at least five minutes.

## Week 6—Back to School [cont...]

### *5 Finger Breathing*

#### **Take 5**



Stretch your hand out, then using the index finger of your other hand, trace up and down your fingers. As you slide up, breathe in, and as you slide down breathe out.

### *The Magic Shell*

Help your child find a small token that they can carry with them. Perhaps the worry stone, a favourite pebble or shell that they found on holiday, or a ribbon or something that they like the feel of. Encourage your child to carry it with them and whenever they begin to notice anxiety creeping up, support them to touch the stone and start to focus on their breathing.

### *Hand Massage*

A hand massage is a wonderful calming exercise for children of all ages. You can choose to use a lotion or perhaps a massage oil scented with lavender to aid the calming process. Spend a few minutes really focusing on massaging their hand using your thumbs. Work in circles around the palm of the hand and wrist before gently pulling your fingers up each of their fingers and thumb. Older siblings might like to do this on each other.

### *Letting go of worries*

Imagine that you are blowing bubbles. In each bubble that rises into the air, put a thought or feeling into it that you no longer want inside you. See the first bubble rise up. Think about what is inside. See the thought, watch it, and see it slowly float away. Try not to judge or think about it more deeply. Do this until all the worries are gone

