

## Mindful Parenting Tips

**Mindfulness – paying attention to the present moment with kindness and without judgement.** *Mindful Parenting by Kristen Race, Ph.D.*

- **Stress is contagious – children can sense when their parents are overwhelmed – so try to manage your own stress (self-care)**
- **“Be the person you want your kids to become” – the work for parents is learning to make peace with our own imperfections, be more present for our kids, and cultivate self-compassion**
- **“The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence. When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers.” (Thich Nhat Hanh)**
- **“You can’t stop the waves but you can learn how to surf” (Jon Kabat Zin, MBSR, UMASS Med School)**
- **Turn off the amygdala (emotion center of the brain, smoke alarm) to access the pre-frontal cortex (thinking, logical part of the brain, to be able to put out the fire) Helps kids feel safe**

- **It takes practice!! We have to exercise the pathway in the brain that leads to the rest & digest response (parasympathetic nervous system)**
- **Mindfulness activities to calm the amygdala:**
  - a. **Pay attention to the breath ie. Square breathing**
  - b. **Create awareness of your surroundings ie. Grounding exercise: 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste.**
  - c. **Practice gratitude with a gratitude journal, jar, or at dinner take turns saying 1 thing you are grateful for that happened today**
  - d. **Cultivate empathy by volunteering together and talking about why it's important, encourage the use of good manners.**
- **Focus on 1 task at a time (Don't watch a movie with your kids while checking your emails or Facebook)**
- **Have unstructured "down time" for creative free play when adults are not directing the activity**
- **Praise the process, not just the outcome**
- **Use mistakes as lessons and talk about yours**

**Meaningful moments (it doesn't have to be hours but it has to be time when you are focused on them) with your child create a sense of connection which builds resilience!**

**"It's as simple as practicing paying full attention to our kids, with openness and compassion, and maybe that's enough at any moment" Dr. Bertin**

**[\(www.childmind.org/article/mindful-parenting-2/\)](http://www.childmind.org/article/mindful-parenting-2/)**