



Created & Distributed by:  
 City of Madison  
 Community Development Division  
 Child Care unit

# ENEWS

Winter 2023



"Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right."  
 Oprah Winfrey



## Welcome Bilingual Child Care Specialist Elisa Martinez



Elisa Martinez is excited to join the Child Care Unit as the Bilingual Child Care Program Specialist. Elisa is coming from 4-C Madison, the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, where she worked as the Spanish Bilingual Early Childhood Specialist. Elisa created professional development opportunities for child care providers in the area, worked as a Quality Coach for the YoungStar Child Care Quality Rating and Improvement System, acted as a liaison to the Latino community, and is a Registry Tier-3 approved trainer for a variety of topics including Pyramid Model, the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and the Ages & Stages questionnaire and others.

Elisa is passionate about the work of early childhood education and strives to do what is best for children and child care providers. She is excited to be part of an amazing team at the City, and to use her skills and talents as a Spanish Bilingual Early Childhood Consultant and trainer to support early childhood educators in program development while also evaluating programs to ensure high quality standards are implemented ensuring equitable access to all children and families.



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## EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION PROVIDER SURVEY

The City of Madison plans to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) to provide funding for early childhood care and education services and is soliciting feedback from local providers around what should be prioritized. All are welcome to provide feedback regardless of residency or employment in the City of Madison. [English Survey](#)

Encuesta de proveedores de cuidado y educación en la primera infancia [Encuesta en Español](#)

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## AFTER SCHOOL

Congratulations to Goodman Community Center's After School Program being nationally recognized by [The After School Alliance!](#)

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## Virtual Office Hours for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:

Interested in talking about a situation that has come in your program or classroom? Want to know more about IECMHC? We're holding weekly open office hours via Zoom. Click the [link](#) to schedule a time.

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# Black History Month

On Tuesday, February 7, 2023, the Madison Common Council approved a resolution to Celebrate February 2023 as Black History Month.

Join the City of Madison in celebrating Black History Month.

- [Mayor's message](#) on Black History Month.
- [Madison Public Library events and resources](#)



## Public Input on Request for Programs (RFP)

The City of Madison Child Care Unit will be holding a meeting via Zoom to gather public input on our upcoming RFP. This is your opportunity to share your thoughts and ask questions regarding the RFP.

Plan to join us on Zoom on Thursday, February 23 from 5:30 to 6:30. The zoom registration link is highlighted below. Contact Becca Gray ([rgray@cityofmadison.com](mailto:rgray@cityofmadison.com)) or Monty Marsh ([mmarsh@cityofmadison.com](mailto:mmarsh@cityofmadison.com)) with any advance questions that you may have.

Topic: Child Care Unit Public Input on RFP

Time: Feb 23, 2023 05:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Register [here](#).



# Professional Development

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## Regional Learning Collaborative

It's a Great Place to Work!

**Cultivating staff with a healthy organizational culture**

Wednesday, January 18

9:00-10:15 am



Cultivating staff with a healthy organizational culture

Wednesday, January 18 - Statewide Collaborative

Peers in the out-of-school time field share successes and tools you can use to grow your own supportive program.

### **Wednesday, February 1 - Regional Collaborative**

With a smaller regionally focused group begin to frame and explore what the landscape looks like in your part of the state and specifically within your program

### **March- One-on-one technical assistance**

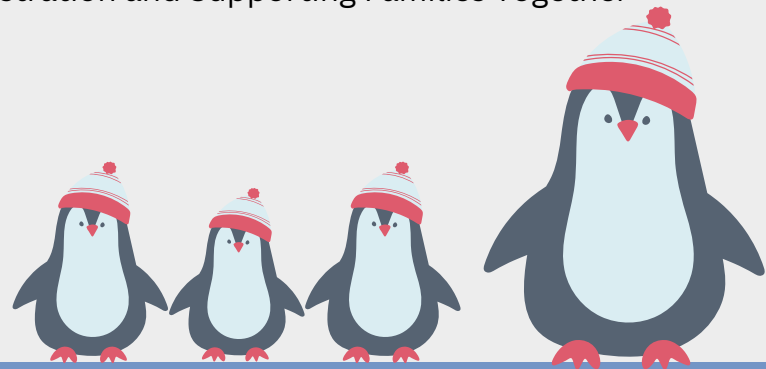
This is your time to get the support of your facilitator and consultant to begin to frame your organizational needs.

As a learning collaborative, during the coming year you will have the opportunity to develop supportive relationships with other providers, receive personalized technical support, and dive deeper to make lasting long-term changes within your organization.

### **Register Here**

If you have any questions, contact us at [wisconsinafterschoolnetwork@marshfieldclinic.org](mailto:wisconsinafterschoolnetwork@marshfieldclinic.org)

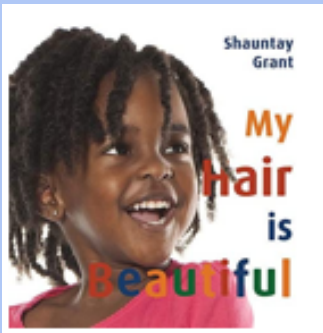
Proudly enriching the health of our communities through a partnership between Marshfield Clinic Health System and the Wisconsin Afterschool Network, with generous support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Wisconsin Department of Administration and Supporting Families Together Association.





## CHECK IT OUT!

If you are interested in receiving a copy of one of the featured books below, please contact your childcare specialist.



### **My Hair is Beautiful** by Shauntay Grant

Age Range: 3 Months to 3 Years

A celebration of natural hair, from afros to cornrows and everything in between, My Hair is Beautiful is a joyful board book with a powerful message of self-love.

### **Amazing Grace** by Mary Hoffman

Age Range: 4 - 8 Years

Grace loves stories, whether they're from books, movies, or the kind her grandmother tells. So when she gets a chance to play a part in Peter Pan, she knows exactly who she wants to be.



### **Abuelita's Secret** by Alma Flor Ada

Age Range: 5+ years

A boy is living with his family while his father is away. He dreads the first day at a new school because he has nothing special to share about himself. Each family member offers him an object that represents a memory from the summer, but the boy doesn't think any of these is interesting. Then his abuelita whispers a secret in his ear. When it's his turn to talk, all he needs to do is open his backpack.







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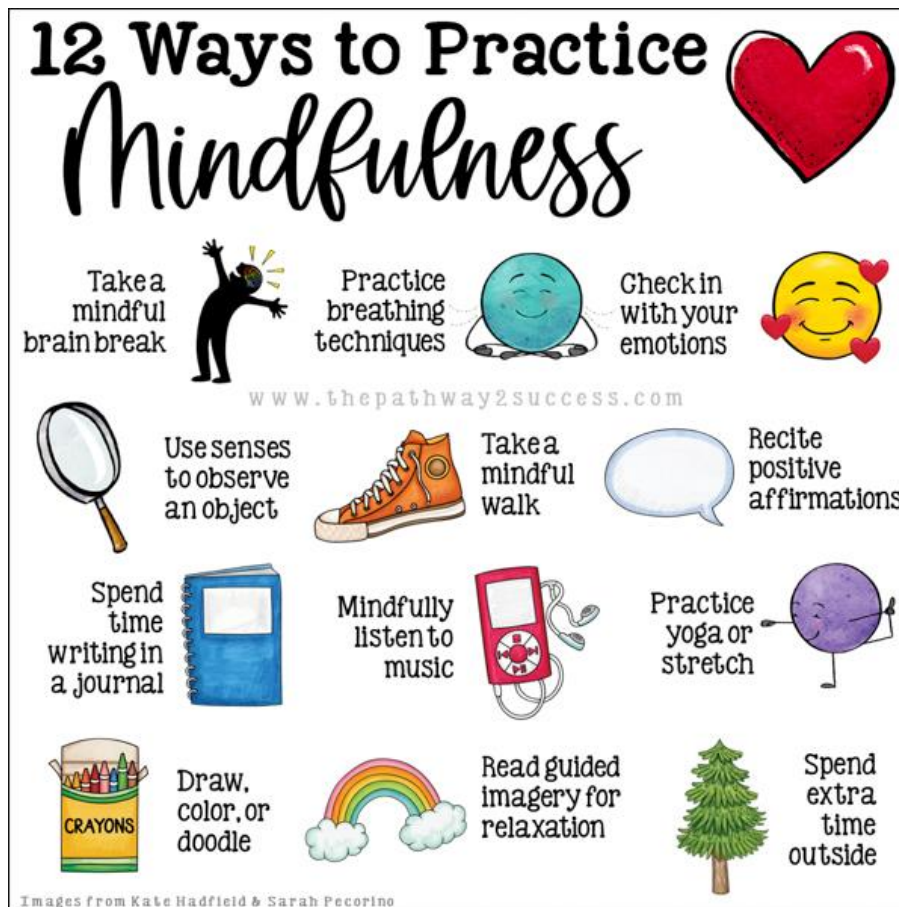


# 12 Simple Ways to Practice Mindfulness

Source: December 19, 2022 by pathway2success Leave a Comment

Mindfulness is a self-regulation strategy. With practice, it can help us feel calm, confident, and focused. And while it's very helpful for us, as adults, mindfulness is a powerful skill we can teach to children and young adults.

The goal of this article is to promote simple mindful strategies you can try with your students (or kids at home). Mindfulness is about focusing on the present. That means we don't need much at all to practice mindfulness, just our bodies, minds, and the "right now."



## Practice breathing techniques.

Breathing techniques are one of the first strategies to practice and teach mindfulness. In many ways, breathing is the basis to everything else; when we can calm our breathing, we can calm our bodies and minds.

- **Balloon Breathing** – Imagine your belly is a balloon. Slowly breathe in and feel your belly expand. Then, slowly breathe out.
- **4-7-8 Breathing** – Slowly breathe in to the count of four seconds. Hold your breath for seven seconds. Then, slowly exhale for eight.





## **Mindfully listen to music.**

The idea of mindful listening is that you are not just listening to music, but focusing on the individual instruments and sounds of what you hear. This process alone puts you in the moment. Consider trying different genres of music. Nature sounds work well too!

## **Take a mindful walk.**

Get outside! Take 10-15 minutes to just walk outside and observe nature. Consider what you see, hear, smell, feel, and even taste. You can give kids a clipboard to document their findings as they explore.



# Spend time journal writing.

Use journal writing as a mindful strategy. Provide a simple prompt, set calming music, and allow time to just write. Some [mindful journal](#) prompts to try include:

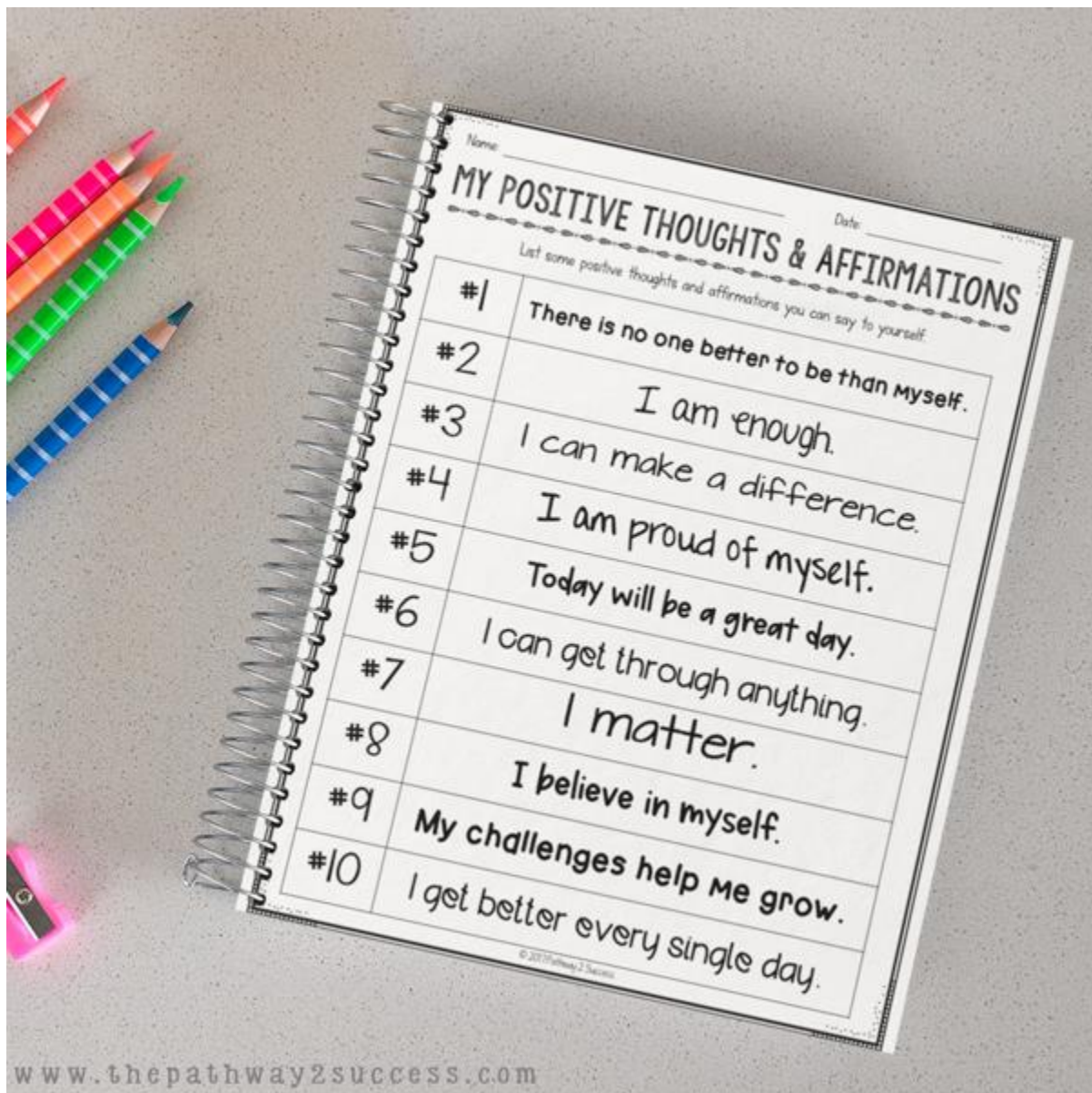
- Take time to reflect. What is one way you have grown this year?
- Imagine you are a Bald Eagle soaring through the skies. What might you see, hear, feel, smell, and taste?
- What are five wishes you have for the world today?
- What are you grateful for today?





# Recite positive affirmations.

There is so much power in positive affirmations. These inspiring self-talk statements remind us that we're capable, strong, and focused on success. Have kids choose their favorite self-talk statements, make a list, and recite those together. This can even be a [daily morning ritual to start the day](#).



## Practice yoga or stretching.

Yoga and gentle stretching integrate movement with mindfulness. Some of my favorite simple postures include tree pose, warrior pose, and cobra pose.

## Check in with your emotions.

Pause and connect with your inner feelings. This mindfulness strategy can help kids and teens focus on the “right now” while also building self-awareness and self-regulation skills. Use these [free emotions check-in sheets](#) to make an emotions check-in part of your every day routine.

**Feelings Check-In** Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Right now, I'm feeling...

☹️ 😞 😓 😩 😄 😔 😡 😊 😁

I feel this way because...

Something that might help is...

Anything else I'd like to share:

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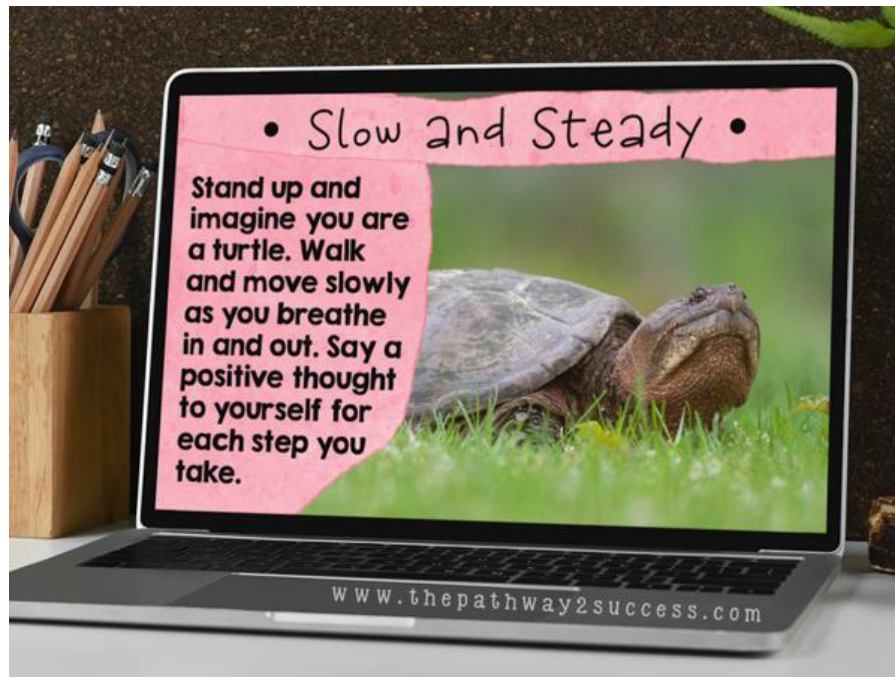
## Read guided imagery for relaxation.

Guided imagery invites your mind to travel somewhere else for a period of time. You might imagine you are at the beach listening to the crashing of the waves, floating on a cloud, or traveling through a rain forest filled with wildlife. There are a number of guided imagery activities you can test out on Youtube for yourself! Here is [one by John Hopkins Hospital](#) just for children.

## Take a mindful brain break.

Brain breaks give a quick pause in the day. These can be used during a transition from one subject to another, after lunch or recess, or prior to an assessment. Some of my favorite [mindful brain breaks](#) incorporate nature and movement.

- **Slow and Steady** – Stand up and imagine you are a turtle. Walk and move slowly as you breathe in and out. Say a positive thought to yourself for each step you take.
- **Colors of the Rainbow** – Stop and look around. Notice what you see. Find something each color of the rainbow.



## Spend extra time outside.

Even in times when you can't walk or explore too far, try spending time outside. Sit and listen to the sounds of nature as you breathe in and out slowly. Learn more about [mindful activities to try outside](#).

## Draw, color, or doodle.

Play calming music and draw, color, or just doodle. [Mindful coloring pages](#) work excellent for this activity. What's most important is to teach kids how to mindfully color. This means just coloring in the moment, and not worrying about what looks "right" or "wrong." Just breathe, color, and be.





## **Use senses to observe an object.**

Choose any object around you; this can be anything from a shoe to a water bottle. Use your senses to observe the object. What does it look like? What shapes do you notice? What materials is it made of? What do you notice that you've never really noticed before? These seemingly simple questions encourage our mind to be focused on the present

## 7 Tips for Getting Through Difficult Conversations

Use these strategies to make difficult talks more open and productive.

Source: [Loren Soeiro, Ph.D. ABPP](#)  
Psychology Today, May 25, 2021

### 1. Have a goal in mind.

Try to identify what you're hoping to achieve before you begin. Perhaps you'd like to ask your spouse to stop teasing you in social situations. Or maybe you intend to ask your boss to back off a bit, to stop intruding into your private life.

Be clear and specific in your own mind about what you want to accomplish; don't just go into the conversation with a vague negative feeling and an intention to let it out. And when you begin to talk, don't just complain about the problem you've noticed: suggest solutions, too.

### 2. Use a non-blaming communication style.

A great template for this type of phrasing would be: "When you do X, I feel Y." In other words, simply explain to the other person that your feelings follow their actions — not that they are deliberately "causing" you to feel low, or that they are "making you feel" some particular way.

Present your feelings as an unintended consequence that you'd like to avoid, and ask for their help in avoiding it. To do this, you may need to take note of your own feelings before you have the conversation. Try to detect any antagonism, or any eagerness to defend yourself; be aware of feeling angry at the other person. Before you meet, work out some ways to express these feelings in a neutral, non-blaming manner.

### 3. Recognize that complex, interpersonal problems have complex, interpersonal causes.

In other words, you'll need to acknowledge your own responsibility for some part of the conflict you want to talk about — especially if this is what you are asking the other person to do.

Be clear about the fact that such issues are never exclusively the fault of one person or the other. Recognize that the conflict was caused by an interaction between the two of you, and thus is due at least in part to your own errors in judgment. So don't insult, don't provoke, and don't accuse. Be open about the problem, but do so without blaming the other person for it.



#### 4. Accept criticism if it's on-topic.

Acknowledge your mistakes. Before you go into the talk, make a mental list of things you're prepared to own up to. (Don't limit yourself to the ones you can find, yourself; there may be some you haven't noticed.) If you want to work out a problem, don't assume that the other person is the only one who needs to change.

However, don't be redirected into an examination of your own faults either; keep the conversation focused on the issue you brought up in the first place. Listen to the other person when they criticize you and tell them you will be happy to talk about that later after you've sorted out the original issue.

#### 5. Phrase requests toward the positive.

Describe the changes you'd like to make, rather than simply complaining about the problem you've noticed. You'll be saying essentially the same thing, but in a way that goes down much more easily. "Our relationship is terrible these days," contains effectively the same information as "I want it to be easier for us to spend time together," but the latter is much less likely to make someone else feel defensive.

Another way to understand this point is to recognize that you are not the only one who will benefit from the changes you're requesting or the solutions you've suggested. Try to think through and explain to the other person why that might be true.

#### 6. Don't feel the need for total victory.

Sometimes you don't need the other person to agree with you. You may only need to get your opinion out there in a neutral, well-reasoned way, so that they can hear you say it and can consider it later, in the fullness of time — even if they're defensive when you first bring it up. After all, if the other person becomes upset or takes your critiques personally, perhaps their reaction proves your point. (The opposite is also true: if you are criticized in a way that makes you angry, your hurt feelings might mean the remark has some truth to it.) So don't expect an immediate behavior change or a full admission of guilt. You may have to accept being "less right" than you think you are.

#### 7. Don't forget to listen.

This might be the most important communication strategy on this list. When you open up a difficult conversation, be aware that it might go in unexpected directions. Be sure to take some time out from trying to make your points so that you can really hear and understand what the other person is saying, from their perspective. Use empathy, slow down, and try to take their point of view. Catch yourself before you react defensively to anything you hear.