



Occupational Therapy in the Classroom

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Your child's classroom is being supported by occupational therapy programming this year. Occupational therapists work with students to encourage skills and strategies that facilitate meaningful participation at school.

Many students have difficulty maintaining focus and attention, or can be overwhelmed with feelings of stress during throughout their day at school. This can make it hard for them to remember important information, play and interact with peers and participate positively in the classroom. Mindfulness is a tool that can assist students in regulating their focus throughout their day at school, on the playground and even at home.

What is Mindfulness?

Most of us often live in a preoccupied state, thinking about the past or worrying about the future. How can we focus when our heads are so full of thoughts!

Mindfulness then, is the practice of paying attention on purpose to what is happening **right now**.

Mindfulness has been scientifically proven to help young people and adults

- Sleep better.
- Feel happier and calmer
- Improve their concentration in the classroom, on the sports field, and during performances.
- Deal with anger.
- Work through anxious thoughts, and low moods.
- Be kinder to themselves, and to others.

In your child's classroom, students will be practicing paying attention to their breathing, sounds, feelings, and thoughts. Students will practice with the occupational therapist once a week for the next 3-4 weeks, with concepts reinforced by their teacher.

Should you have any questions or concerns about Mindfulness or OT in the classroom, please feel free to contact me and/or take a look at the additional resources on the back.

Kind Regards,

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Occupational Therapist
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Mindfulness Ideas for Home:

- Spending 1-2 minutes at dinner or before bedtime stating what you were most thankful for or happy about during your day
- For a few minutes at the beginning or end of a day, sitting together quietly and focusing on the sounds you hear, or your breathing (or even just sit together without any distractions such as the television, phones, computers, etc.)
- Have fun together laughing and being silly!
- Play outside, go for a walk and talk about all the things you can listen, feel, smell, see, and maybe even taste
- Create a calm and quiet space in the house without technology that anyone can use to calm down and relax in

Additional Resources (there are many but here are a few just to start with):

Mindful Star Exercise- <http://blissfulkids.com/mindfulness-for-children-take-5-exercise/>

Mindful Families - <http://www.mindfulfamilies.ca>

Mindful Schools- <http://www.mindfulschools.org>