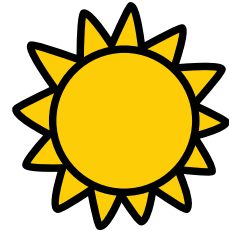


THE MOODERATORS

Teacher & Caregiver Guide:

THE GOOD MORNING SONG



**The Kids
Mental Health
Foundation™**

GoNoodle

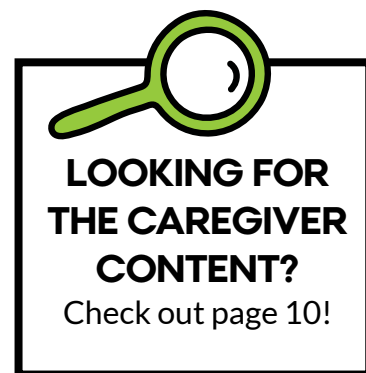
For more information and learning resources visit [KidsMentalHealthFoundation.org](https://www.KidsMentalHealthFoundation.org).

The Mooderators are back... and better than ever!

Welcome to the Teacher Guide for The Mooderators.

This series is in partnership with The Kids Mental Health Foundation, created by the experts at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

The Kids Mental Health Foundation and GoNoodle are working together to bring elementary schools fun, engaging episodes on social and emotional wellness. We hope these guides can give you more insight into children's mental health and activities you can bring into the classroom.



Overview

We want our Mooderators episodes and guides to help you navigate mental and emotional concerns that young children face every day.

Each episode features a song from The Mooderators, Skylar and Clara. These songs focus on four social-emotional goals: energize, focus, calm and support.

In this guide, we've included:

- Insights on the how and why behind each topic
- In-class activities to further engage students
- Caregiver pages that explain each topic and offer activity adaptations for home
- Links to further reading on KidsMentalHealthFoundation.org

What We'll Focus On

"Good Morning Song" highlights transitions for children, especially from home to school. We'll energize students through an upbeat song and dance routine, as well as support them in a positive classroom environment.

This guide helps you continue to energize and support kids. We will:

- Describe a supportive classroom setting for children.
- Define mindfulness and how you can encourage children to "be in the moment" to help their focus.
- List ways children can support each other within the classroom.

ENTERING THE SUPPORTIVE CLASSROOM

The Classroom: The Place to Be

“Welcome to the classroom
It’s the place to be
You can be yourself
Set your imagination free”

The Mooderators said it best...the classroom is a powerful place! It’s where children can freely be themselves. As their teacher, you have a unique role in shaping your classroom into a supportive, safe space.

First, it’s important to understand that your students come to you with countless perspectives and experiences.

For some students, the classroom is an oasis. They bring stress from their home environments and need the classroom as a break from the chaos.

Others might be more apprehensive about school. They may be nervous about new classroom material or friends. School may feel like a barrier to their happiness.

NEXT STEPS IN THE CLASSROOM

- Take some time to reflect on your students and their unique backgrounds.
 - What experiences have shaped who they are now?
 - What uncertainties and worries do they bring to your door?
- Consider asking students for their unfiltered opinions about school.
 - How do they usually feel coming to school each day?
 - Help them name their feelings – Are they excited? Nervous? Tired?
- Reflect on their answers.
 - What misconceptions do your students have about school?
 - How can you reassure them?

Let's listen to our feelings

What do they say...

Cause there's no right or wrong way to feel

It can be overwhelming to consider all the feelings your students bring to the classroom. You also may struggle with feeling weighed down by these emotions. How can you leave space for these feelings... but also keep students engaged in learning?

NEXT STEPS IN THE CLASSROOM

- Establish the classroom as a “safe space” for all emotions. Encourage students to share how they’re feeling in the morning, even if those emotions are challenging.
 - Remember that downplaying emotions can cause physical stress on the body, like memory loss and stomach pains. A study from Harvard Medical School found that people who suppressed their emotions were more likely to develop serious medical conditions.¹
- Acknowledge and validate the challenges but also encourage students to approach school with a new mindset.
 - Give space to talk about the challenges, and normalize the emotions that arise from them.
 - Help them problem-solve what they need:
 - A break to use a coping tool?
 - Practicing mindfulness (see page 5) and being in the present moment at school?
 - Gently emphasize that It’s important to be willing and ready to learn for information to sink in effectively. It’s difficult to learn when your mind is focused elsewhere.

¹<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3939772/>

Feel all your feelings
Just remember to take a breath
Be in the moment, that's all you need
Refresh, reset
It's a brand new day

You want your students to be fully present in the classroom. And one way to do that? Mindfulness.

Mindfulness means paying close attention to the present moment. When practicing mindfulness, we are very aware of our body and what it is doing. We are aware of what is happening around us, our thoughts and our feelings. Focusing on the here and now also helps ease worries about the future.

Why is this practice so important for children?

It goes back to how their brains are developing. As children grow, their prefrontal cortex skills expand rapidly. These skills include emotional regulation, impulse control and focused attention. Mindfulness focuses on all these skills and therefore is a great exercise for the developing brain.²

It can help children focus more, control big emotions, and worry less about the future. Mindfulness is also a useful tool for children with stressful home environments. It can help them get out of their thoughts and focus on the current setting, school.

NEXT STEPS IN THE CLASSROOM

How can you encourage kids to be mindful? Follow these tips:

1. **Be present:** Encourage kids to maintain eye contact while speaking. Put away phones and listen intently to what others are saying. Have them repeat back what you've said and ask follow up questions to show they're interested. Remind them to catch themselves when distracted with their own thoughts or things around them, and refocus on what others are saying.
2. **Pause:** Encourage students to focus on the situation at hand, by pausing and taking a breath. Emphasize observing what is happening around you using all senses and considering how your body feels in the moment.
3. **Follow routines:** The "Good Morning Song!" is a great opportunity to create a positive morning routine in the classroom. This song can serve as a physical cue to your students that it's time to focus on the present in the classroom.

²<https://www.nytimes.com/guides/well/mindfulness-for-children>

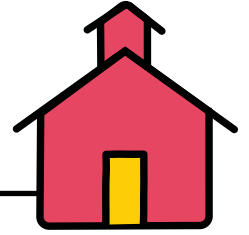
In good days, in bad days We're here for you There's room for your feelings And there's room for you

We've talked about prepping students to enter the classroom. An equally important consideration is how to encourage students to support one another. In a supportive classroom, students feel love and care from you and fellow students. Here, they can truly be themselves and learn to the best of their abilities.

NEXT STEPS IN THE CLASSROOM

Here are a few ways to encourage a supportive classroom:

1. **Emphasize having a “team” atmosphere:** Remind your students that your classroom is like a team. Everyone on the team has different perspectives and talents and can bring something unique to the table. Team members also support one another and build each other up, rather than tear each other down.
2. **Do a morning check-in:** Consider a formal routine for welcoming children into the classroom. Check-in verbally with each student about how they are feeling, and offer physical support (when desired), through hugs or high fives. Check out the “Jump Start the Day” activity on the next pages for more.
3. **Reward caring actions:** You can foster a supportive environment by calling out students who are leading by example. Consider gathering students at the end of every week and asking for examples of classmates who performed kind deeds. You may also keep your own eye out for this positive behavior during the week. Consider verbal praise (or a small reward) for these students to encourage these actions.



Student Activities

The following two activities focus on “being more present” in the classroom.

“Jump Start the Day” serves as a morning routine to welcome each student. “On Thin Ice” is a physical activity (inside or outside) that builds body awareness and mindfulness.

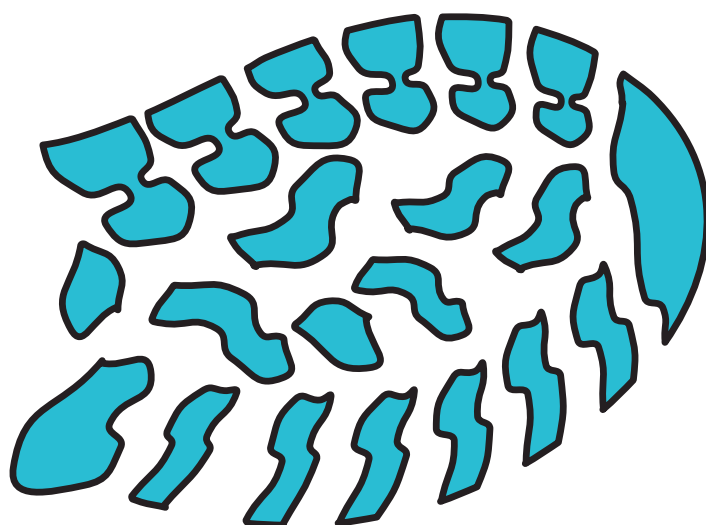
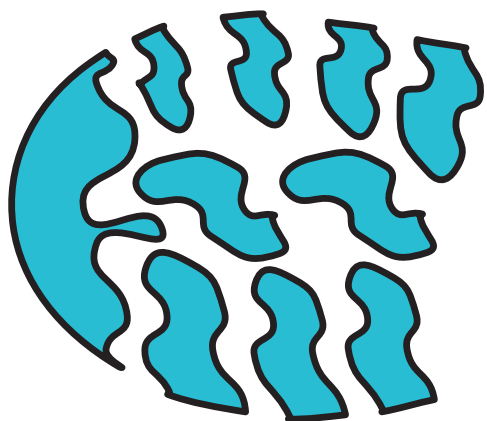
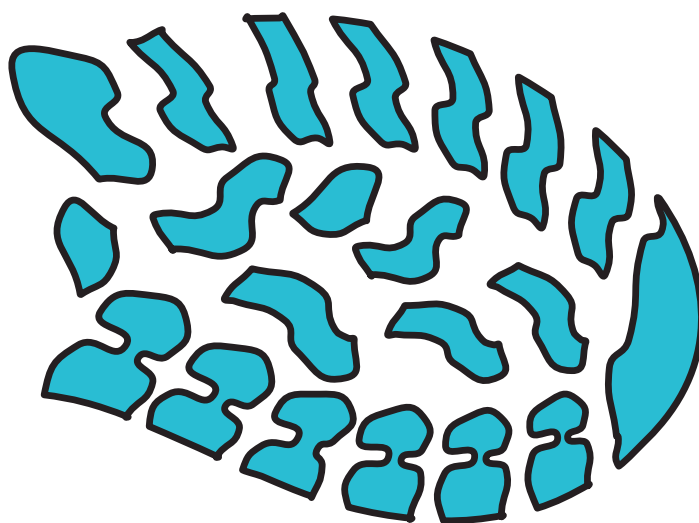
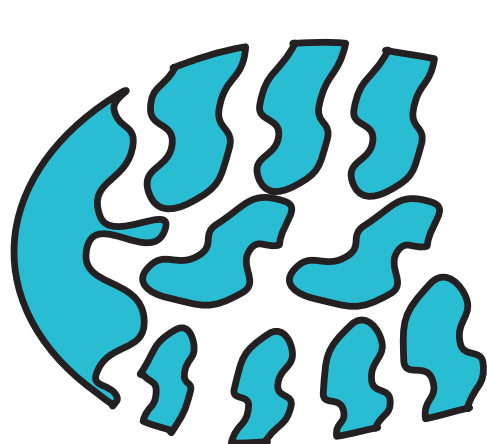
Jump Start the Day

Materials: “Jump Start the Day” footprints and Morning Mood chart, strong clear tape (clear packing tape is probably best)

Objectives: This activity is to welcome children as they enter the classroom each morning. It:

- Encourages children to set aside their worries at the door.
 - Uses actions, like jumping and high fiving, as physical cues that they are entering a new place with a new mindset.
-
- Welcome each child into the classroom. Encourage them to jump on the footprints. Then, have them touch whichever emotion they are feeling that day. Next, have them touch whichever teacher response they want from you.
 - o The footprints offer students a physical cue that they are entering a new space and must focus.
 - o The Morning Mood chart helps them acknowledge their emotions and feel support from their teacher.
 - Encourage the child to repeat the Morning Mantra at the bottom of the Mood Chart: “Here, Safe and Ready to Learn!”
 - o The mantra is a physical cue that it’s time to be present in the classroom.
 - Once everyone is checked in, consider playing the “Good Morning Song” to energize the room. Search “Mooderators” on GoNoodle.com.

JUMP START THE DAY



JUMP START THE DAY

How are you feeling today?



HAPPY



SAD



NERVOUS



EXCITED



ANGRY

How can I help?

HUG

HIGH FIVE

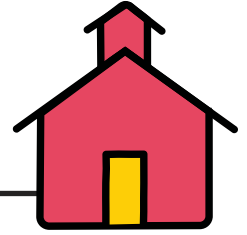
FIST BUMP

ENCOURAGEMENT

TALK ABOUT IT

Here, Safe and Ready to Learn!

Student Activities



On Thin Ice

Objective: This activity builds mindfulness through careful, targeted body movements.

Materials: None

Directions: This activity should take around 15 minutes.

- Have the students line up on one side of the classroom.
- Create a scenario where students try to get to dry land at the other end of the room. To do so, they must walk “on thin ice,” carefully following your instructions and paying attention to their body movements.
 - o “Today, we are going to pretend we are in the middle of a frozen lake and need to get to dry land. The problem is we’re walking on very thin ice! You’ll want to listen to me very carefully and walk carefully so you don’t break the ice.”
- Here are a few sample directions you can use. Feel free to think of your own too.
 - o “Pick up your left leg slowly and set it back down in front of you. Do the same with the right leg. Repeat five times.”
 - Mindfulness reflection: “Is it hard to lift up your legs slowly? Does it get tiring when you do it many times?”
 - o “Twirl around three times but make sure you do it slowly and in a straight line. You don’t want to fall!”
 - Mindfulness reflection: “What do you notice on the walls when twirling? Is it hard to focus on things since you’re spinning?”
 - o “Hop on one foot until you reach the wall. Make sure you don’t go too fast or you might fall down and crash through the ice!”
 - Mindfulness reflection: “When standing on just one leg, does that leg feel tired? Is it hard to balance?”

Mooderators Activity: On Thin Ice (continued)

- o “Walk backwards five steps but be careful not to crash into anyone else or you’ll crack the ice.”
 - Mindfulness reflection: “Is it hard to stay in a straight line when walking backwards? Is it hard not to fall?”
- o “Do an arctic bunny hop on the ice for 3 hops [crouch down and hop like a bunny].”
 - Mindfulness reflection: “When you bend to bunny hop, can you feel the floor or carpet with your hands? Is it cold or warm? Is it fuzzy?”

Post-Activity Reflection: Ask students what they thought of the activity.

- What was the hardest task to perform? Did you fall down or think you may fall down?
- How did you get “in the moment” in order to focus? Did you take a deep breath, or try to tune out all other noise?
- Did the journey get easier as you got closer to the end? Or was it harder to concentrate because all you could think about was finishing?

Conclusion: “We used this activity today to focus our bodies and minds on what was happening right here, right now. We didn’t want to be distracted by other thoughts, so we had to really concentrate on what we were doing. This careful attention to the ‘right here and right now’ is called mindfulness. Mindfulness is a skill that helps us remember to stay in the present moment.”

Welcome to the Caregiver Guide for The Mooderators. This series is in partnership with The Kids Mental Health Foundation, created by the experts at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

The Kids Mental Health Foundation and GoNoodle are working together to bring caregivers fun, engaging episodes that cover various mental health topics. We hope these guides can give you more insight into children's mental health and activities you can bring into your home.

Overview

We want our Mooderators episodes and guides to help you navigate challenging social-emotional concerns that young children face everyday.

"Good Morning Song" features a "morning welcoming" song for children as they transition from home to school. This song can also apply to the transition when children return home from school or begin the weekend.

Objectives

In this guide, we will:

- Define mindfulness and how caregivers can encourage children to "be in the moment."
- List ways you and your child can build a supportive environment at home.
- Offer activities for you and your child focused on mindfulness.

Bringing a Mindful Attitude

Home as a Safe Landing Place

It can feel overwhelming to manage your child's emotions, on top of everything else you're trying to get done. One moment they're happy and ready for anything, and next they're angry and sullen.

Though these feelings are challenging, it's a good thing that your child feels comfortable expressing them at home. Your home is a "safe landing space" for them, where they can be their true selves and release the stresses from the day.

These emotions don't need to take over, however. Acknowledge the feelings your child has but encourage them to start the day with a new mindset, open to new possibilities.

Presence of Mind at Home

Big feelings can cause kids to react in big ways. Sometimes, they regret those reactions. That's why it's important they learn to be more aware of what they're thinking and feeling and not let emotions take over.

This is all part of mindfulness, being aware of the present moment, our thoughts or feelings, our surroundings – without judging.

Why practice mindfulness? It has several benefits for growing kids. Here are a few:

- Better focus
- Stronger control of emotions
- Less worry
- More self-confidence³

NEXT STEPS IN THE HOME

How can you practice mindfulness at home? Here are a few ideas:

1. **Be present:** Encourage kids to maintain eye contact while speaking. Put away phones and listen intently to what others are saying. Have them repeat back what you've said and ask follow up questions to show they're interested. Remind them to catch themselves when distracted with their own thoughts or things around them, and refocus on what others are saying.
2. **Pause:** Encourage children to focus on the situation at hand, by pausing and taking a breath. Emphasize observing what is happening around you and considering how your body feels in the moment.
3. **Breathe together:** Practice slow breathing with your child to focus your bodies on the present moment. Fill up your body with air and slowly release, taking careful note how your body feels as you release your breaths. This is a great way to refocus when things feel chaotic at home.



Check out this video from The Kids Mental Health Foundation on deep breathing exercises.



³<https://www.gonoodle.com/company/post/how-to-help-your-kids-practice-mindfulness>

Home Is Where the Heart Is

In addition to serving as “safe landing space,” home should also be where your child feels most supported.

Brainstorm with your child ways that family members can show each other support. That might mean being present at special events. Or it could be a hug to end the day. Ask your child how they feel supported already and if there’s anything else that would help them feel even more loved.

At-Home Activities:

MOOD MONITOR

- Keep tabs on the “emotional temperature” of your home with a Mood Monitor.
- In the morning (or after school), ask your child to point to how they are feeling on the Mood Monitor worksheet.
- It can sometimes be difficult for children to verbalize their feelings so visuals can better help them express themselves.

ON THIN ICE

- Check out page 10 of this packet for a fun game you can adapt to home.
- This game can be played inside or outside and helps children become aware of their body movements.

HERE FOR EACH OTHER

- Encourage positive behavior in the home by praising family members for their support at the end of each week.
- Consider asking family members to highlight times they felt supported that week.






Links to More:

Interested in learning more about mindfulness? Check out these links at KidsMentalHealthFoundation.org and GoNoodle.com.

<https://www.gonoodle.com/company/post/how-to-help-your-kids-practice-mindfulness>
Search "Practice Mindfulness" at KidsMentalHealthFoundation.org.

MOOD CHART

How are you feeling today?

 HAPPY	 SAD	 NERVOUS
 EXCITED		 ANGRY