

## II. Curriculum Overview

**The Peace of Mind Program** includes innovative curricula for elementary and middle school students that integrate mindfulness practice, social and emotional learning, and conflict resolution. The goal of the **Peace of Mind Program** is to help shift school cultures toward kindness and inclusion.

**Peace of Mind** for Early Childhood students is the very first step on what we hope is a long and positive journey on the path of mindfulness and social and emotional maturity. Like the other curricula in the **Peace of Mind** series, this beginning curriculum includes three critical and interwoven components:



Mindfulness



Social and emotional learning



Kindness and partner practice



### Mindfulness

Every lesson begins with mindfulness practice. Since this is most students' first introduction to mindfulness, the concepts are taught slowly, gently, and with repetition. The mindfulness sessions are intentionally short initially, and gradually grow to a minute or more by the end of the curriculum. Given the relatively short duration of each session, mindfulness practice for Early Childhood students is referred to as a **Mindful Moment**.

The mindfulness sessions for Early Childhood are more adult-directed than those in the **Peace of Mind** curricula for older grades due to the developmental needs of young children, who may find it difficult to sit still and quietly for very long without hearing any instructions.

The mindfulness skills taught in this curriculum are designed to build from week to week, moving from simple deep breathing to cognitive regulation strategies. Here is a sequential list of the mindfulness skills that are taught in this curriculum:

1. Mindful body position
2. Flower breaths
3. Four-square breathing
4. Take 5 breathing
5. Rainbow breaths

6. Gravity hands
7. Body scan
8. Visualization
9. Squeeze & Release
10. Heartfulness
11. Just like me
12. Gratitude
13. Heartfulness for self
14. Amazing me
15. Positive self-talk/affirmations
16. Body scan/Wave combo
17. The Wave
18. Positive self-talk/problem solving
19. Mindful seeing
20. Mindful hearing
21. Mindful touch
22. Mindful smell
23. Mindful taste



## **Social and Emotional Learning**

Every lesson contains a **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)** component. These lessons involve puppets, stories, and games to illustrate the skills taught. The SEL components of each lesson are grouped into six units that follow the rhythm of a traditional school year and the interpersonal development of young children. Each lesson is also interwoven with the mindfulness skills listed above, and each mindfulness skill helps reinforce the SEL topic.

This is a sequential list of the unit topics:

1. Mindful Bodies, Mindful Breaths
2. Mindful of My Feelings and Thoughts
3. Mindful of Others
4. Feeling Good About Myself
5. Mindful Problem Solving
6. Mindful Senses & My Growing Brain



## **Kindness Pals**

The final component of each lesson in this curriculum, starting in the second unit, is **Kindness and Partner Practice**, also simply known as “Kindness Pals.” Because children are still adjusting to being in school and figuring out how to “be” in school early in the year, we don’t introduce Kindness Pals until the last

lesson in Unit 1, when students are a bit more settled and able to think beyond themselves in the classroom.

Kindness Pals is an engaging activity that achieves several goals:

- Reminding the children to make kindness part of their daily lives. Doing kind things for their Kindness Pals spills over into their treatment of others.
- Developing the habit of treating people with kindness through regular practice.
- Giving children opportunities to get to know each other and to “find the good” in others whom they might not have gotten along with in the past or whom they think they just don’t like.

Once we introduce Kindness Pals, students will keep their same pals for several weeks before changing to a new pal. In this curriculum there is a prompt to change pals every three weeks. Changing pals when the month changes can be helpful in terms of planning, and this ensures multiple partner changes over the course of the year. Feel free to use a different schedule that works for your pacing.

It is recommended, however, that pals stay the same for two or more weeks in Early Childhood grades. They may not always remember their pals after just one turn working with that person during **Peace of Mind** class, and will not usually be able to work independently with their Kindness Pals between weekly **Peace of Mind** classes. Classroom teachers may also use the Kindness Pal partners for other partnering activities within the class routines.

## Important Considerations



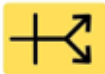
**Peace of Mind** for Early Childhood uses **gender neutral language** to reflect the inclusive practices being taught and meet the needs of our diverse children. Instead of “boys and girls” you might say “lovely learners,” “fabulous friends,” or “awesome amigos” in these scripts.



The **Opening** and **Closing** of each **Peace of Mind** lesson are brief, but important, anchors at the beginning and end of class that also serve to link the lessons and encourage students to practice the skills learned in class throughout the week.



The **Feelings Check-In** is a new addition in this edition. It allows children to report how they are feeling at the start of class in a quick and self-reflective manner. While demonstrating how they are feeling, the corresponding movement is a nifty little intervention to help manage the feeling chosen.



**Optional Lesson Extensions** are included at the end of each lesson, and can be used to extend the time spent on the original lesson, to supplement between lessons throughout the week, or to differentiate lessons slightly between grade levels. For example, if a Pre-Kindergarten class has followed the Peace of Mind curriculum for one year, the following year in Kindergarten the same lesson framework can be used and modified slightly with the lesson extension activities. Depending on your children's needs, this curriculum could also be easily adapted to first grade.

### American School Counselor Association Alignment

The primary goals of ***Peace of Mind for Early Childhood*** are to help students establish basic foundational mindfulness skills; to learn to work in groups; to learn basic self-regulation and problem-solving skills; and to nurture the innate kindness and acceptance in each child. In the process of teaching these skills, ***Peace of Mind*** fulfills many of the ASCA goals for young children.

***Peace of Mind*** for Early Childhood is aligned with ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success, and the majority of the Category 2 Behavior Standards are met through this curriculum. The ***Peace of Mind*** Curriculum Series also supports the majority of the six important Category 1 Mindset Standards for all students:

Mindset 1: Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social-emotional, and physical well-being

Mindset 2: Self-confidence in the ability to succeed

Mindset 3: Sense of belonging in the school environment

Mindset 6: Positive attitude toward work and learning

Specific ASCA Behavior Standards covered by this curriculum include the following:

Learning Strategy 1: Demonstrate critical thinking skills to make informed decisions

Learning Strategy 2: Demonstrate creativity

Learning Strategy 4: Apply self-motivation and self-direction to learning

Learning Strategy 9: Gather evidence and consider multiple perspectives to make informed decisions

Self-Management Skills 1: Demonstrate ability to assume responsibility

Self-Management Skills 2: Demonstrate self-discipline and self-control

Self-Management Skills 4: Demonstrate ability to delay immediate gratification for long-term rewards

Self-Management Skills 5: Demonstrate perseverance to achieve long and short-term goals

Self-Management Skills 6: Demonstrate ability to overcome barriers to learning

Self-Management Skills 7: Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem

Self-Management Skills 9: Demonstrate personal safety skills

Self-Management Skills 10: Demonstrate ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities

Social Skills 1: Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills

Social Skills 2: Create positive and supportive relationships with other students

Social Skills 3: Create relationships with adults that support success

Social Skills 4: Demonstrate empathy

Social Skills 5: Demonstrate ethical decision-making and social responsibility

Social Skills 6: Use effective collaboration and cooperation skills

Social Skills 7: Use leadership and teamwork skills to work effectively in diverse teams

Social Skills 8: Demonstrate advocacy skills and ability to assert self when necessary

Social Skills 9: Demonstrate social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment

## Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Framework

<https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>

The CASEL framework is directly supported by this curriculum, and the sequence of lessons follows the CASEL wheel. While all mindfulness practice is always helping us with **Self-Awareness**, Unit 1 in particular is designed to help students become more aware of themselves. Unit 2 moves on to **Self-Management** strategies, culminating in building a calm-down toolbox students self-select from what they have been taught thus far. Units 3, 4, and

5 continue to build upon these foundational skills with lessons that foster **Responsible Decision-Making, Relationship Skills** (including Conflict Resolution) and **Social Awareness**.

### Teaching Strategies GOLD: Social Emotional Learning Objectives

**Peace of Mind** for Early Childhood aligns with the social-emotional learning objectives in the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment. These include:

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
  - a. Manages feelings
  - b. Follows limits and expectations
  - c. Takes care of own needs appropriately
  
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships
  - a. Forms relationships with adults
  - b. Responds to emotional cues
  - c. Interacts with peers
  - d. Makes friends
  
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations
  - a. Balances needs and rights of self and others
  - b. Solves social problems

### District of Columbia Early Learning Standards: Social Emotional Development

**Peace of Mind** for Early Childhood aligns with the six social-emotional early learning standards the District of Columbia has adopted from the Common Core State Standards. These include:

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Description</b>
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- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 26. | Expresses a variety of feelings and learns to manage them                |
| 27. | Recognizes the feelings and rights of others, and responds appropriately |
| 28. | Manages own behavior   |
| 29. | Develops positive relationships with adults                              |
| 30. | Engages and plays with peers   |
| 31. | Resolves conflict with others  |

**Peace of Mind** for Early Childhood aligns with the Montgomery County (MD) Public Schools Standard for Mental and Emotional Health for Kindergarten.

*Standard 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to use mental and emotional health knowledge, skills, and strategies to enhance one's self concept and one's relationship with others.*

**Peace of Mind** related performance Indicators for this standard include:

A. Communication

1.K.A.1. Recognize Methods of Communication:

1.K.A.1a. Demonstrate positive communication among peers.

B. Emotions

1.K.B.1 Examine emotions and responses to various situations

1.K.B.1.a Identify basic emotions/feelings.

1.K.B.1.b Demonstrate expressions of basic emotions/feelings

E. Character Traits

1.K.E.1 b. Identify actions to make a friend.

It is equally important to allow the children to get a chance to work with many of the other children in the class. Changing pals often enough to allow many different partners gives students practice in building relationships with diverse classmates.

Every lesson in Unit 2, after Kindness Pals are introduced, will give detailed instructions and scripts for the instructor to follow. The scripts are provided throughout Unit 2 to give you time to make this a comfortable and predictable component of each **Peace of Mind** class. In Units 3-6, the Kindness Pal section will simply give a numbered list of actions students can take together during this portion of the class. If you need a refresher on the Kindness Pal script as you are teaching Units 3-6, just flip back to Unit 2.

