

## III. How to Use This Curriculum

***Peace of Mind*** is different from other SEL programs in that mindfulness serves as the foundation for all of the social and emotional lessons in the curriculum. Mindfulness increases children’s attention and focus, enhancing lessons for students and teachers alike. Based on over a decade of experience teaching ***Peace of Mind***, we believe that SEL lessons following mindfulness practice are experienced more deeply and fully by the students.

***Peace of Mind*** is designed to be used by classroom teachers as part of the weekly classroom routine, or by counselors or specials teachers who visit classrooms on a weekly basis.

This curriculum consists of 32 sequential weekly lessons and an optional final review lesson. All of the lessons begin with mindfulness practice. After foundational mindfulness skills have been established and reviewed, the lessons build to include practice in listening and focusing, recognizing and managing thoughts and feelings, respecting and working with others, developing resilience and self-confidence, and using simplified brain science to better understand our own behaviors.

The lessons are designed to be taught sequentially within the Unit, as each lesson builds upon the skills previously learned. All of the mindfulness practices benefit from repetition throughout the week if possible.

### Lesson Planning:

Each class in this curriculum is designed to take about 30 minutes. Given that the attention span of young children is much shorter than this, each lesson is broken down into three consistent parts, each lasting about 10 minutes. Providing a small movement break between the parts may be needed initially. After the first five lessons, the class will always end with Kindness Pals, a segment that incorporates movement and talking and that is much anticipated by most students. The typical class flow is as follows:

- Greetings, Feelings Check-In, Previous Lesson Recap, and Mindful Moment (10 min)
- Social-Emotional Learning Lesson (10 min)
- Kindness Pals and Closing (10 min)

Sticking to this format will help keep little bodies engaged and attentive. Whenever possible, the SEL lesson will incorporate movement as well.

### Materials:

- Bell or chime - Choose a bell or chime with a full, clear sound that continues for many seconds after ringing it.
- A Puppet sidekick of your choosing
- Kindness Pal lists – A template is in Week 6, or feel free to use your own.
- **Week 5:** Small tangible items such as a rock, marble, or paper clip for each student to hold during the game *Don't Lose Your Focus!*
- **Week 12:** One piece of blank paper for each student's "toolbox", plus copies of the icons and toolbox template included in the Appendix
- **Week 14:** Floor Puzzle with enough pieces for each student to have one. For most classes a 2x3 floor puzzle with 24 pieces will be sufficient
- **Week 28:** Brain diagram for each student
- **Week 31:** Several different strong-smelling items to pass around for students to sniff
- **Week 32:** One raisin or other small food item for each student to taste

### Required materials

There are NO required books and videos for this curriculum. However, we suggest the following optional materials that you might use to extend your lessons.

### Optional Resources

Week	Resource
1 What is Peace?	<i>The Peace Book</i> by Todd Parr
2 Belly Breathing	<i>Take A Deep Breath</i> by Sue Graves Real or artificial flower
3 Animal Breaths	<i>Yoga Pretzels: 50 Fun Yoga Activities for Kids and Grownups</i> Card Deck by Leah Kalish and Tara Gruber Pictures or models of various animal

Week	Resource
4 Listening With My Whole Body	<i>Whole Body Listening Larry at School</i> by Elizabeth Sautter and Kristen Wilson
5 What is Focus?	<i>Focused Ninja</i> by Mary Nhin
6 Introducing Kindness Pals	<i>Have You Filled A Bucket Today?</i> By Carol McCloud
7 What Are Feelings?	<i>Glad Monster, Sad Monster</i> by Ed Emberly and Anne Miranda <i>Today I Feel Silly</i> by Jamie Lee Curtis <i>My Many-Colored Days</i> by Dr. Suess Todd Parr's Feelings Flashcards
8 What Are Thoughts?	<i>What is A Thought? (A Thought is A Lot!)</i> by Amy Kahofer and Jack Pransky
9 Different Sized Feelings & Calming Down	<i>When My Worries Get Too Big</i> by Kari Dunn Buron
10 A Feeling Called Worry	Todd Parr's <i>Don't Worry Book</i> , Kevin Henke's <i>Wemberly Worried</i> , and Tom Percival's <i>Ruby Finds a Worry</i>
11 Problem Sizes & Matching Reactions	Pictures of "small problems" kids typically face
12 Building a Calm-Down Toolbox	<i>Waiting Is Not Easy!</i> by Mo Willems
13 We're All Different	<i>It's OK to be Different: A Children's Picture Book About Diversity and Kindness</i> by Sharon Purtill <i>Everyone Matters</i> by Pat Thomas, <i>It's Okay to be Different</i> by Todd Parr
14 Teamwork	<i>Our Class is a Family</i> by Shannon Olsen <i>Swimmy</i> by Leo Lionni <i>Everyone Matters</i> by Pat Thomas
16 Gratitude Project	Mo Willems <i>The Thank You Book</i> and Todd Parr's <i>The Thankful Book</i>

Week	Resource
17 Needs vs. Wants	Pictures of items we need and want for sorting
18 Self Esteem	<i>I'm Gonna Like Me: Letting Off a Little Self-Esteem</i> by Jamie Lee Curtis <i>I Like Myself!</i> by Karen Beaumont
19 Identity Affirmations	<i>I Am Enough</i> by Grace Byers <i>I Am Every Good Thing</i> by Derrick Barnes <i>Our Skin, A First Conversation About Race</i> by Jessica Ralli and Megan Madison <i>I'm Mixed</i> by Maggy Williams <i>I Am an Amazing Asian Girl</i> by Yobe Qiu <i>I Am Whole: A Multiracial Children's Book Celebrating Diversity</i> by Shola Oz
20 Naming My Strengths	<i>What I Like About Me</i> by Allia Zobel-Nolan <i>It's Great to Be Me</i> by Melissa Ahonen <i>I Can Do Hard Things: Mindful Affirmations for Kids</i> by Gabi Garcia
21 Communicating with Confidence	<i>Stand Tall, Molly Lou Mellon</i> and <i>Speak Up, Molly Lou Mellon</i> by Patty Lovell
22 Mistakes Are Okay	<i>Mistakes are How I Learn</i> , by Kiara Wilson <i>I Choose to Try Again</i> by Elizabeth Estrada <i>I Am! Affirmations for Resilience</i> by Bela Barbosa
23 Conflicts	<i>The Day No One Played Together: A Story About Compromise</i> by Donalisa Helsley "The Zax" in <i>The Sneetches &amp; Other Stories</i> by Dr. Seuss

Week	Resource
24 Choosing Kindness	Carol's McCloud's website <a href="http://www.bucketfillers101.com">www.bucketfillers101.com</a>
25 Communication Styles	<i>I Can Use an I-Statement</i> by Jenelle French.
27 Standing Up for Others	<i>The Berenstain Bears and the Trouble With Friends</i> by Stan Berenstain <i>The Recess Queen</i> by Alexis O'Neill and Laura Huliska-Beith <i>A Children's Book About Teasing</i> by Joy Berry
28 Brain Introduction	<i>Rosie's Brain</i> by Linda Ryden
29 Hippocampus	<i>The Fantastic, Elastic Brain</i> by JoAnn M. Deak
32 My Growing Brain	<i>I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato</i> by Lauren Child

You can find videos to support the curriculum on the Peace of Mind website here! <https://teachpeaceofmind.org/video-library/>

## A Note On Puppets

### **Puppet Logistics**

Using a puppet sidekick may feel challenging initially. To help you, specific scripts are provided for the first two units of the curriculum. It is perfectly fine to read directly from the scripts included here while you use your puppet with a class. Remember, all eyes will be on the puppet and not on your face. Just keep the hand moving as you read and most children won't even notice!

In most other lessons beginning with Unit 3, specific scripts for the puppets are replaced with general guidelines so that you may create your own dialogue with your puppet.

Go ahead, be creative and try to lose any self-consciousness! The laughter and delight of the children will let you know this is an important and engaging

component of **Peace of Mind** class for Early Childhood students. They will also beg you week after week to bring the puppet back.

## **Puppet Benefits**

There are many benefits to using puppets in your classroom:

**Reviewing Information** - You will find that if you repeat to the puppet whatever you just told the class, it gives you a great way to review the material you have taught and allows the children to feel as if they know something the puppet does not.

**Children as the Leaders** – The puppet can make “mistakes” that children often make, and then the children can point them out and tell the puppet what the mistakes were. This is a great way to de-personalize behaviors and talk about them in an objective way. It also allows children to laugh at themselves (the puppet) in a unique and enlightening way, and to be “experts” who teach the puppet new things.

**Classroom Management** - Bring out the puppet only when the class is quiet. Explain that if the children are talking too much the puppet won't be able to talk, and put it away. You can also say the puppet is shy and too much noise is frightening. The children will love the puppets so much, and get so excited when they come out, that this an important routine to establish. Don't be afraid to put the puppet away completely and not bring it out for the rest of the lesson if a class repeatedly is too rowdy. This will help make your next session smoother.

**“The Talk”** – At some point, you will find a student looking at you suspiciously and then shouting out, “Hey, that's just your *hand* and *you're* the one talking!” This realization might take longer than you would think, which just shows how the line between real and imaginary is so wonderfully subtle at this young age. When this happens, pause your story. Move the puppet to the side or behind your back, as if you don't want it to hear what you have to say. Tell the class you are going to let them in on a little secret, if they can agree to keep the secret. Kids love secrets, and they will vigorously agree. Then whisper loudly “The puppet isn't real! It IS just my hand and my voice making it talk. But isn't it more fun to hear the puppet tell you funny stories and act silly than it would be if it were just me up here talking to you? So can we all agree to keep this important secret so we can keep having fun with the puppet? Okay, great!” Then continue on with the lesson.

## Choosing and using your own Puppet

Take some time to find a puppet that you will enjoy using. It's important to choose a puppet that has a good working mouth that opens and closes. (Many puppets' mouths do not.) I use a puppy dog named Paco, as I find it symbolic of the children at this young age: excitable, enthusiastic, and often very active. While I also incorporate a few different puppets with consistent personalities -- a shy, anxious lamb, a grouchy ladybug, and so on -- I have primarily stuck with Paco as the main puppet we use each week, and will refer to "Paco" in these scripts. Of course feel free to use whatever name you choose for your main puppet, and to incorporate other puppets as you feel comfortable doing so.



## Using *Brainy Hand* or Making Your Own *Brainy Puppet*

When you begin the final Unit on Brain Science, the children will learn how to make a Brainy Hand and will color and label the parts of the brain (instructions and a template are included in the first lesson in this unit.) These tools will help you teach a simple version of brain science that supports lessons on calming and managing big feelings. Unit 6 contains several lessons with the Brainy Hand. Using the hand model of the brain developed by Dr. Daniel Siegel, this teaches small children about three important parts of their brain:



- **Amygdala** – the thumb, kept tucked inside the fist until Amygdala speaks in the lessons.
- **Hippocampus** – the area on the open palm.
- **Pre-Frontal Cortex (PFC)** – the four fingers folded over the thumb.
- Teachers feeling crafty may also desire to make their own puppet version of the Brainy Hand using a sock, mitten, or glove and adding craft pieces to mark the three areas listed above. Using a homemade **Brainy Puppet** and/or a hand model of the brain as indicated in the lessons will help students recall the names and functions of these three important areas that work together to regulate emotions. Plus, it makes the lessons interactive and more fun for them!

## Puppet Alternatives

If using the puppets just doesn't work for you, instead use the scripts to tell the children stories about an imaginary friend/pet/relative/and so on.