

30 Mindful Moments
for Kids to Feel
Calm and Focused
Anytime, Anywhere

Breathe like a Bear



Kira Willey

Illustrated by Anni Betts

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For the children of
Donegan Elementary School,
who always greet me
with hugs and smiling faces.

Contents

Foreword by
Michelle Kelsey Mitchell • vii
Introduction • ix

1
Be Calm

17
Focus

33
Imagine





49
Make Some
Energy

65
Relax



Conclusion • 81
Acknowledgments • 83
About the Author
and the Illustrator • 84



Foreword

Do you ever feel like the children in your life could use a little help calming themselves down? Or maybe they need guidance learning how to focus or how to find positive energy. Mindfulness, the practice of being fully in the moment, is the answer. When kids discover that they're in control of their bodies through their breath, they can move to a state of awareness and positivity anytime, anywhere.

How we teach our kids this essential and life-enhancing skill is a question that Kira Willey answers in *Breathe Like a Bear*. Kira's mindfulness exercises are simple, fun, and incredibly engaging. Kids (and their grownups) will love doing these activities.

Children who practice mindfulness are better able to self-regulate, have improved social skills, sleep better, and demonstrate higher self-esteem—and this is just the beginning of all the positive effects. There's also increased focus.

decreased anxiety and depression, and greater levels of academic achievement.

Chances are, if your family is anything like mine, the adults will begin doing these exercises even when the kids aren't around. They're just *that* catchy and enjoyable. And the beauty of Kira's work is that they can be done anywhere—in the car, in the classroom, at home, or even on the soccer field!

Set the tone for focus, calm, and positive energy with the child in your life—or your own inner child—by diving into the practices of this captivating book.

Michelle Kelsey Mitchell

*Cofounder of YoKid and
the National Kids Yoga Conference*



Introduction

When we pause and take a few deep breaths before reacting in just about any situation, things usually go better, right? If you're a parent or teacher, I'm sure you agree. Imagine if we could teach this critical skill of self-regulation to children very early in life. What more valuable skill could we give them?

Our children are growing up in a turbulent world. Add in packed schedules and the pressures of school and homework, and stress and anxiety are often the result. And the more kids are exposed to technology, the more disconnected they can feel from themselves.

The easy and fun mindfulness practices in this book will help young kids develop self-awareness, improve focus, release anxiety, and stretch their imaginations. Simple questions like, "What kind of cloud do you feel like today?" help them get in touch with their emotions in a fun and age-appropriate way.

Pick a few favorites to learn, and do them whenever (and wherever) they fit into your daily life. Maybe you try “1-2-3 Clap!” to get energized each morning, and “Today I’m Going to Be . . .” to set a positive intention for the day ahead. You might do “Candle Breath” at bedtime as a calming way to end the day. In the classroom, you could try “Rainstorm” to focus your students’ attention before diving into a lesson, or “Send Good Thoughts” to teach compassion. And if you and your kids do these together, you’re getting the benefits as well!

Mindfulness doesn’t have to be complicated. You don’t need a meditation cushion, chimes, or incense of any kind! And there’s no need to go into lengthy explanations with kids about why mindfulness is good for you. In fact, the fewer words, the better. Just start breathing like a bear together, and see what happens.

I’d love to hear how you’re using this book, so please get in touch! You can find me at kirawilley.com.



Calbe



Candle Breath * 5

Hot Chocolate * 6

Flower Breath * 8

Count to Five * 11

Bear Breath * 12

Your Favorite Color * 14



Do you ever feel a little, well, hyper? Like you have ants in your pants? It can be really hard to calm down sometimes. These exercises are easy and fun, and they'll help you settle your mind and your body so that you feel calm and peaceful. You can do these as many times as you like, and you might even want to try your favorite one with your eyes closed. Before you start, sit up tall and hold your body still.



Candle Breath

Imagine you're holding a candle.

Take a long breath in, and slooowly blow the air out toward your candle.

You want to make your candle flame wiggle, but . . .
DON'T BLOW IT OUT!

Long breath in, slooow breath out.

Long breath in, slooow breath out.

Long breath in . . . now blow your candle out!

Aaahhh . . .