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| **Still mountain****Building life skills** : balancing – concentration – self and emotional awareness **Rationale** : using the body as an object of concentration (dropping from the head to the body)- building attention - becoming aware of its different sensations and needs – cultivating a base of safety and centeredness in the body **Intention**: encourage an attitude of curiosity – develop concentration - awareness of how it feels in the body **Activity**: mountain **Follow up**: when queuing up, waiting for something … and tuning in to the body **Worksheet/ journal: “**my body feels …”write or draw the sensations, name the posture, record time and share.Key points/backgroundWhat does our body help us to do? What do we use our body for? Is it important to take care of the body (be mindful of the body)? Why?Our body gives us a lot of information about how we feel (happy, sad, angry, safe…) and if we like or don’t like something. Our body tells us something about our experience in that moment, our limits, and our needs. It is helpful to notice when our body is sending us signals, to understand the language of the body. It helps us know what we need e.g. food if we are hungry, sleep if we are tired, drink if we are thirsty, a quiet moment if we are tense or frustrated, a coat if we are cold, achy, sick… to relax more easily, have more control of our actions, to build body skills (sport, music…)We can be mindful of the body, notice our body sensations during the day, at home, at school, inside and outside, just before going to sleep…discover how it feels to be us in that moment, what we need, how we feel, how it changes all the time, our posture in relation to space and gravity (e.g. often when our shoulders are curled forward we feel threaten inside and when they are open we feel confident…)Happy discovery!Suggestions/further activitiesThe child could pretend to be somebody else to help them stand in this still posture e.g. a guard, police man/woman, dancer…Challenge to stand like a mountain concentrating on our body sensations for 30 second, 1 minute…(increasing the time)Play distractor, when a child tries to distract the other (making sounds – moving around… How does it feel when there is a distraction? What do you do when there are distractions in class? …)Adding awareness of the breath e.g. “Breathing in I am aware of my whole body – breathing out I let go of tension in my body “ |
| **Squeeze squeeze squeeze****Building life skills** : concentration skill – self- regulation **Rationale** : using the body as an object of concentration (dropping from the head to the body) - letting go of tension through tensing and then relaxing the muscles**Intention**: encourage an attitude of curiosity – develop concentration - awareness of tense and relaxed feeling**Activities**: squeeze **Follow up** : after sport, before sleeping **Worksheet/journal:** Design your own activity/game stretching and relaxing the muscles, describe the feeling before and after and 3 things you like about your body.Key points/backgroundTensing and relaxing the muscles enables us to notice and release some tensions and can help with stress/anxiety and sleep.It can turn off the fight or flight response and bring the body back to pre-stress levels, engaging the parasympathetic nervous system (soothing part). Increasing the feeling of calm and relaxation.Suggestions/further activitiesYou can add more imagery e.g. Pretend you are holding a soft ball in both hands and squeeze squeeze squeeze feel your strong arms and let go.Pretend you are yawning, lift your arms over your head stretch stretch and let your arms drop back to your side.Pretend you are a turtle, lift your shoulders to hide your head hide hide hide and gently let your shoulders drop.Pretend you are going to bite into a giant chocolate square, big open mouth and another bite, one last bite.Pretend somebody is throwing water at you, scrunch your face and open your eyes to check out, scrunch it again …Pretend you are going through a really small tunnel, squeeze your stomach squeeze squeeze and let it go soft .Pretend you are going to do a bomb in the swimming pool squeeze your legs, squeeze, squeeze, squeeze and let go.Pretend you are trying to get a pencil with your toes squeeze squeeze squeeze and let go.Spaghetti game – laying down or standing the children can choose to be a cooked spaghetti (soft/relax) or raw spaghetti (tense/hard) and somebody comes and guesses. This can be done a few times or you could use an imagery stiff like a robot – soft like a rag doll Stretches are also a way to experience muscles relaxing e.g Children pretend to be giraffes reaching for leaves on the highest branch of a tree, then pretend they are turtles pulling their arms, legs and heads into their shellsStretching the eyes can help during a busy day – imagining the eyes are like a clock and with the eyes gently closed going from 1 o clock all the way to 12 o’ clock stopping at each hour and the same anti clock wise Pushing - push with both arms against a doorframe. Hold for a count of ten. Then release. Notice the difference between how muscles feel during pushing and after |
| **Body scan****Building life skills** : concentration skill – building towards self and emotional awareness through the body**Rationale** : using the body as an object of concentration (dropping from the head to the body) and noticing sensation inside the body (body awareness) this helps more awareness of how emotions/needs manifest in the body**Intention**: encourage an attitude of curiosity – develop concentration - awareness of changing sensation in the body **Activity** : body scan **Follow up**: after sport, before sleeping, body in movement (e.g. while walking, running…)**Worksheet/journal:** drawing or writing about the sensation in the bodyKey points/backgroundThrough our body we can feel sensation from external sources e.g. touch temperature or internal sources e.g. throbbing, tingling, tensing… It responds to emotions (happiness, anger…) to thoughts ( joyful thoughts, worries…).Becoming familiar about the different sensations in the body, understanding its language helps us to develop self-awareness, emotional awareness and better respond to our needs. Sometimes when we have an unpleasant feeling in the body we try to escape it through distraction like eating, taking it out on somebody else, becoming really boisterous or unsociable…Pausing to be mindful of the body sensations can help us better understand our feelings and respond to them with awareness. The more we do the body scan the better we understand our body and its signals for each emotion, need, feeling… it helps build our mind and body connection. Suggestions/further activitiesShine a torch light inside your body and name 3 sensations within/3 points of contact …You can draw slowly around the body of child lying on a large piece of paper bringing their attention to each part of the body as the pen moves pass it. Index finger on forehead how does it feel? Touch one or 2 fingers on your lips, how does it feel? (help calm down)Place hand on knee/ elbow - feel the working of the joint as it moves around – what does it feel like from inside? – Without placing a hand I touch my head I feel my head – I feel my head without touchingWide or narrow focus e.g. feeling my feet, feeling my whole body Butterfly body scan – shy butterfly will only rest on you if you are really relaxed - name different parts of the body where the butterfly gently landsYou can also send gratitude to the different parts of the body: thank you for my feet helping me to walk/run/ jump… through the day (smiling, sending love and gratitude)Visualisation: imagining a waterfall flowing down each part of the body With awareness of the breath “Breathing in I am aware of my whole body/breathing out I let go of tension in my body”To still the body you can place chips (e.g. from the game connect 4) on different parts of the body (forehead, wrists, ankles) - It can be done standing, seating or laying down, laying on the grass…Concentrating on a bit of your body that is not agitated - Place that feels good or not so good, send some love  |
| **Mindful balancing****Building life skills**: balancing skill – concentration skill – building towards self-control working within limits - developing resilience **Rationale** : using the body as an object of concentration (dropping from the head to the body) and finding a balance (metaphor: wobbly/strong emotion and need time to find balance) **Intention**: encourage an attitude of curiosity – concentration skills- awareness of balance – physical boundaries - patience/resilience - somatic attention (learning from information received through senses – information received from interaction of self and environment) **Activity**: balance **Follow up**: when there is a need to focus, before a writing task, sitting at the dinner table… **Worksheet/journal**: design your own balance postures, time and share balancing activity.Key points/backgroundBalances help strengthen the body and increase our awareness of sensory input (connecting the mind and body) giving a better sense of where we are in space and how body parts work together. Concentration is important to balance. Gazing at a point straight forward can help balancing. Practicing balancing can help with self-confidence. It helps slowing down and becoming aware of ones limits. Balance activity can be used as a metaphor to illustrate how sometimes we can get wobbly not just physically but also emotionally and find out how best to get back in balance. It can also be an interesting activity to look at resilience, how it feels, what do we think /do when we lose our balance, what would be the most helpful? Suggestions/further activitiesCombining balance and e.g. breathing , arms moving up, breathing in, arms moving down, breathing out, on your tip toes as you breath in and slowly back on your feet as you breath out.Encouraging children to create their own balance Mindful movement (stretching) from a balance position arms, neck, shoulders, waist, legs, body…Movement and a story or a theme “Simon says”Yoga, chi gong, tai chi… |
| **Mindful Walking****Building life skills**: balancing skill – concentration skill – building towards self-regulation **Rationale** : develop the PFC (Pre Frontal Cortex)and quiet time for the amygdala, being present in the body while walking - physical boundaries - patience - somatic attention**Intention**: encourage an attitude of curiosity – concentration skills “walking ”, awareness of how it feels in the body– start with a certain time 30 seconds, 45 seconds or 1 minute and extend it over time (challenge them) **Activities**: Mindful walking **Follow up**: Notice when you are walking during the day at school and at home, illustrate how it feels in your body**Worksheet/journal:** draw a picture of yourself walking mindfully , compare it with an animal walking mindfully, other activities you can you do mindfully.Key points/backgroundDeveloping awareness of the body in motion helps us to learn to move mindfully aware of the environment and others, to be in the present moment connecting with the body and its sensations while moving, reconnecting mind and body and adopting a gentle pace to help our body relax. Walking as if you are stroking the earth. Just like the breath gives us an indication of our state of mind, how we move and hold our body does too.Suggestions/further activitiesWith some contrast e.g. walk slow walk fast really slowing down stop and stand mindfully. What was it like to slow down steps? Was it easier to walk quickly or slowly? Did your mind wander?Mentally repeating “walking walking” or inspiring words like “peace” “joy”… or singing Visualising the paws of a chosen animal kissing the earth with each steps grows a peace flower…a super hero …a person that was discussed in lesson…Walk as close as possible to things, people without touching Walking in the mud, in the water, in snow, on ice (not breaking it)… like a business person/an animal, a robber, a policemen, a king/queen, a robot… – stressed out – like a baby – in the water – really tired - through a relaxed happy place/ noisy dark scary placeBarefoot really sensing the different groundsDo it playfully to increase engagement and focus to start with e.g. What does it feel like walking on your heel, on your toes, on the outside edges of your feet…?Walking with a partner, one is blindfolded, holding hands , with something on the head, a distractor as a partner…Feeling the movement each movement slow 4 times (e.g.sitting motions – standing motions) Walking and feeling confident (posture) for those children who lack confidence**Mindful movement** – stretching - running – dancing – playing football – standing up – writing – putting your hand up…Dancing with awareness with different type of music – pausing and noticing in between – sharing at the end (feeling seen and accepted regardless of the emotions felt)Playing a sport mindfully – pausing when a team score – pausing and caring when somebody is injured… |
| **Dry shower****Building life skills** : building towards self-awareness**Rationale** : energise the body , making space (starting anew) **Intention**: encourage an attitude of curiosity –awareness of how it feels in the body (before/after – each moment is new)**Activity**: dry wash**Follow up**: : when you feel sluggish or want to shake things up at school or at home**Worksheet/journal**: create your own dry wash or massage on the face, the hands or the feet… or massage somebody. Key points/backgroundTapping or massaging the different parts of the body helps bringing awareness to those parts and noticing. If introduce as making space, starting anew it can help letting go of any residual feeling from previous activity (tension…).There are many health benefits of a massage. Suggestions/further activitiesIt can be done with stroke (self-massage or in pairs).An accessory can be used (tennis ball – paint brush…).Story massage/touch, nursey rhymes with massage strokes… |
| **Like a tree****Building life skills** : balancing skill – concentration skill – building towards self-regulation **Rationale** : visualisation encouraging imagination and positive thinking – engaging the “right” brain **Intention**: to create a calm and positive mind state**Activity**: tree**Follow up**: design their own visualisation, pause to go through the visualisation.**Worksheet/journal**: draw your tree and what you let go/drew in.Key points/backgroundVisualisation can help trigger the soothing system, increase dopamine (feel good hormone).Suggestions/further activitiesTogether with the breath breathing in feeling the warmth breathing out letting do… |