

Responding to Meltdowns

~ Acknowledge your child's feelings with a statement like "I see that you are very _____ (angry, sad, frustrated, scared) because we have to _____ (leave the beach, do your homework, go to bed)".

~ Set clear boundaries on behaviors. Let them know it is okay to feel big emotions. However, they must pay attention to their words and actions when they feel this way, some behaviors are unacceptable (kicking, hitting, screaming, etc.).

~Try your best not to be reactive. Take a deep breath yourself, and stay calm. By staying cool, calm and collected, you are modeling to your child how to regulate emotional and behavioral reactions.

~As difficult as it is, see if you can sit with your child as they are experiencing these big emotions with love and kindness. Ask them if they want space to cool down.

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QUESTIONS?

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OBJECTIVES

At Mindful Keiki, I aim to cultivate the ABCs
(**Attention**, **Balance** and **Compassion**)

While not an entirely linear progression, it's helpful to view these three qualities as developing sequentially starting with attention, leading to emotional balance, and culminating with compassion. Their development is modest but meaningful at first and grows stronger over time.

Though I am planting seeds and practicing these skills with your keiki, I am only with your keiki once a week. To see the most effective change in the way your child approaches difficult situations, these skills must be practiced at home.

Please reach out, if you would like more activities and resources to help your child or yourself practice mindfulness at home.

ACTIVITIES TO DO WITH YOUR CHILD AT HOME

QUICK 3 MINUTE MEDITATION - ATTENTION

Have your child lay down and place their hand on their belly. Have them notice the sensation of their belly rising and falling with their breath. Remind them during the meditation to bring their attention back to their breath if their mind starts to wander

THREE GOOD THINGS - BALANCE

When faced with a disappointment, we acknowledge our feelings, and then we think of three good things in our lives too.

Leading the Discussion

1. Do you ever feel disappointed or frustrated?
~Listen to children's stories.
2. How did that make you feel?
~ Acknowledge children's feelings and, if appropriate, talk about them.
3. I bet even when you're disappointed, there are good things in your life, too. Let's name three good things together.
4. Once established, you can ask them to think of 3 good things anytime they are feeling unpleasant emotions. You may receive pushback, so don't force it.

GRATITUDE WALK - COMPASSION

1. Use objects to make two lines on the floor about 10 ft apart.
2. Start at one line, and take steps or jumps to the other side. Every step or jump forward, say something you are grateful for. Ex. "I am grateful for the rain because it feeds the plants, I am grateful for my feet so that I can walk)

Children learn much more from modeling than from what we tell them. Cultivating your own mindfulness practice will have a profound effect on your child.

CULTIVATING MINDFULNESS IN YOUR OWN LIFE

MEDITATE FOR 5-10 MINUTES DAILY (IF CAN)

Like anything, meditation is a skill that you can develop with practice. At first, it may seem difficult, boring or pointless, but with time, you will begin to notice a change in how you experience the world.

See if you can set aside 5 minutes to simply sit and breathe. Try to focus on your breath with the exclusion of all else. If thoughts pop up, and they will, sit back and watch them pass, bringing yourself back to your breath in the present moment. Continue bringing yourself back to the breath and be sure to be patient with yourself.

NOTICE YOUR REACTIONS

As we begin to cultivate this awareness within ourselves, we can start to notice when we're feeling strong emotions that lead us to act irrationally. This awareness allows you to take a step back before acting out of anger, fear, or sadness. Pay attention to the things you do and say when your child is having a meltdown or you are in another conflict situation. Step back from your emotions before taking action.

HO'OPONOPONO - RECONCILIATION AND FORGIVENESS

We are all human and we all make mistakes. It is completely normal to have moments where you lose it with your child or someone else, it's what you do after that's important. Sitting with your keiki after an unpleasant situation and making it right will make all the difference in the world, apologize if necessary. Not only will it affirm your child that they are safe, loved, and important even when experiencing uncomfortable emotions, but it will show them that no one is perfect, and we all mess up sometimes.