

MindUP Home Connections: Welcome Letter

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We recently introduced an exciting, evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) program that can help our students better engage in learning, learn to self-regulate their behavior, and improve their attention skills and well-being. MindUP™ is a classroom-based program that teaches children strategies guided by the fields of neuroscience, mindful awareness training, social and emotional learning, and positive psychology to support success in the classroom and life.

MindUP™ was created collaboratively by university scientists and school-based educators. The program helps children understand the ways brains work and how their thoughts and feelings affect their behavior. It has five goals:

- 1) To foster a cohesive, caring classroom climate
- 2) To foster focus and mindful awareness
- 3) To build emotional literacy
- 4) To increase positive qualities such as perspective-taking, empathy, gratitude, and kindness
- 5) To increase optimism, well-being, and resiliency

A core practice of the program is the “Brain Break.” The Brain Break is a simple mindful breathing and listening activity that is practiced three times per day. This activity can help foster attention and self-regulation.

As part of MindUP™, parents and caregivers will have the opportunity to learn about what children are practicing in the classroom through a short online course designed specifically for families to bring MindUP strategies home. The course is designed to complement the school program and can be placed along with children’s learning in the classroom. You can access this course for free at home.mindup.org.

If you would like to learn more about the research around social and emotional learning, please visit www.casel.org. For further details about MindUP™, please visit www.MindUP.org. If you have further questions about the program or would like more information, please feel free to contact me.

We are excited about the potential this program holds for helping our classrooms become communities of better-engaged, more focused, and more optimistic learners!

MindUP Home Connections: The Foundational Lesson 3-5

Dear Families,

We are delighted to be implementing MindUP™, the classroom-based program that teaches children strategies guided by the fields of neuroscience, mindful awareness training, social and emotional learning, and positive psychology to support success in the classroom and life. This week we started **the MindUP program**.

In our Foundational lesson: Building the MindUP Learning Community:

- We discussed the importance of **relationships**, not just for our happiness but for our ability to learn and grow in **positive ways**.
- Students learned that they contribute to their classroom and school community by being **safe, kind, and focused**.
- We brainstormed and created a **learning community agreement** detailing what a safe, kind, and focused community looks, feels, and sounds like. **Ask** your student about the MindUP Learning Community Agreement we created during our lesson!

When we work to create a **safe, kind, and focused** learning community, we can begin to understand the importance of everyone feeling like they belong and are a part of a caring community. **Lesson One** creates a strong foundation for us to be better engaged, more focused, and more optimistic learners!

What you can do at Home:

Check out our Bringing MindUP Home Handouts for fun and simple ways to practice with your child at home. If you are interested in learning more, begin Bringing MindUP Home: K-5, a series of short modules designed to explore the concepts of MindUP and highlight skills that are beneficial to your child and you as a parent/caregiver. Access these resources at home.mindup.org

Thank you for your support and involvement!

MindUP Home Connections: Unit One Grades 3-5

Dear Families,

We are excitedly diving into the rest of Unit 1: My Mindful Brain. MindUP™, the classroom-based program that teaches children strategies guided by the fields of neuroscience, mindful awareness training, social and emotional learning, and positive psychology to support success in the classroom, and life is in full swing in our classroom. This week we started **Unit 1: My Mindful Brain**.

In Unit 1: My Mindful Brain:

- **Understanding the Brain:** Students learned about their brains and how they can use them to focus their attention and calm down. They also learned about the 3 key brain structures. (Ask them what they are!)
- **Learning to Be Mindful:** Students were introduced to the concepts of being mindful and unmindful and made connections about what that means in their own lives.
- **The Brain Break:** We hope this becomes a staple in your home! We introduced the Brain Break, which is mindful listening and mindful breathing, our core mindful aware practice in the MindUP Program. The brain break promotes self-regulation skills.

Unit 1: My Mindful Brain, which includes our Foundational Lesson: Building the MindUP Learning Community, as well as, My Amazing Brain, Learning to Be Mindful, and The Brain Break, serve as a gentle yet profound introduction to The MindUP program. Our students have been highly engaged, excited, and invested in our learning and we hope you can see the magic of the program, in your own homes!

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MindUP Home Connections: Unit Two Grades 3-5

Dear Families,

Unit 2: My Mindful Senses, focuses on the power we have within ourselves, to sharpen our awareness by using our five senses, to help strengthen our attention and focus. When we focus, we are also able to manage our emotions and find calm.

In Unit 2: My Mindful Senses:

- **Mindful Listening:** Students learned to train their attention through mindful and reflexive listening practices. It takes practice!
- **Mindful Seeing:** Students practiced being mindful by using the sense of sight to focus their attention on an external object. It can be difficult, but that is normal! We are training our brains to focus.
- **Mindful Smelling:** Students practice being mindful by using the sense of smell to focus their attention on external items. Using our sense of smell to be more aware of our environment can help us observe our world and sharpen our memories.
- **Mindful Tasting:** Student practice being mindful by using the senses of sight, smell, and taste to focus their attention on external items. Mindful tasting is the process of slowing down to enjoy and appreciate our food as we notice its flavor, texture, and temperature.
- **Mindful Touch:** Students practice being mindful by using the senses of touch to focus their attention on external items. When we focus on the sensation of touch, we activate the brain's alerting and focusing pathways.
- **Mindful Movement:** Students practice being mindful by focusing their attention on internal bodily sensations. Mindful movement can help our students practice focusing their attention and being more aware of how they are feeling.

Unit 2: My Mindful Senses teaches our students to use our senses to notice what is going on around us as well as inside our bodies. We learned skills to train ourselves to slow down and process information, which helps us focus our attention and experience things more fully. Practice makes perfect, in time we will be able to respond to new sensory input calmly to allow for clearer decision-making.

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MindUP Home Connections: Unit Three Grades 3-5

Dear Families,

Unit 3: Building Well-Being with a Mindful Mindset teaches our students skills to help us be more joyful in our lives.

In **Unit 3: Building Well-Being with a Mindful:**

- **So Many Feelings!** Students build on their emotional literacy skills by learning why naming their emotions helps manage them. We define emotional granularity, as the ability to put feelings into precise words. Try this at home!
- **Building Perspective-Taking and Empathy:** Students practice perspective-taking by identifying characters' perspectives and connecting situations in the story to their own lives. We learned that taking others' perspectives can help us better understand others.
- **Practicing Optimism:** Students practice perspective-taking by identifying how optimistic and pessimistic views of a problem differ. They also consider how they can choose to view things with more optimism in their own lives. What are some strategies you can develop at home to approach life with more optimism?
- **Savoring Happy Experiences:** Students practice savoring happy experiences to boost their happiness. Ask your child what activities they enjoy doing that help them feel better.

Unit 3: Building Well-Being with a Mindful is a joyful unit to practice in your own home. We learned how to identify our emotions, how multiple perspectives help us with ourselves and understand our peers, the power of optimism, and how to boost our moods!

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MindUP Home Connections: Unit Four Grades 3-5

Dear Families,

Unit 4: Mindful of Ourselves in the World teaches our students skills to help us be more joyful in our lives.

In **Unit 4: Mindful of Ourselves in the World:**

- **Practicing Gratitude:** Students practice gratitude to boost their happiness and satisfaction with life. We learn how practicing gratitude helps us focus more on the positives in life. What is your family grateful for? Share it with each other!
- **Acts of Kindness:** We learned how when we are mindful of ourselves and are gentle and kind to ourselves, we are happier. And when we are happier, we are more likely to take better care of others, too!
- **Mindful Actions in our Community:** We focused on how our choices and actions affect others. We know that helping others is one way to boost our joy and happiness and that shared experiences help groups come together positively.

Unit 4: Mindful of Ourselves in the World- we learned that being positively connected to our world through mindful choices and actions is important. It helps our world and it helps us! Practicing gratitude every day and understanding how our choices and actions can affect others, not only boosts our own joy and happiness, but also everyone around us! Our minds are so powerful!

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