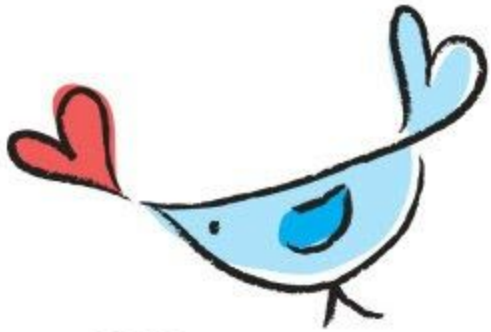
Welcome to Peace of Mind!



Peace of Mind

Mindfulness * Social & Emotional Learning * Conflict Resolution

PreK through Grade 5

Dear Homeschooling Parents,

Thank you for your interest in the *Peace of Mind Curriculum*! *Peace of Mind* is designed to support you in helping your children develop the capacity to meet life's challenges - social, emotional, academic - with skill and compassion.

Through the lessons in *Peace of Mind*, a secular curriculum, children learn to notice and manage their emotions, focus their attention, explore the related brain science, practice kindness, gratitude and empathy, and develop the skills to solve conflicts peacefully.

Like many other mindfulness and social and emotional learning (SEL) curricula out there, *Peace of Mind* is supported by current research. *Peace of Mind*'s other strengths include:

- *Peace of Mind* integrates Mindfulness, Brain Science, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and Conflict Resolution into one seamless, easy-to-use, weekly curriculum for students in PreK through Grade 5 (ages 4 to 11)
- *Peace of Mind* arises out of over 16,000+ hours of development with students over a decade; all lessons have been thoroughly kid tested and are ready for you to use.
- *Peace of Mind* is a year after-year program that takes a spiral approach to reinforcing key skills, meeting the needs of children as they develop.
- *Peace of Mind* offers online and in-person training for parent educators, online student resources, and a community of practice..
- The lessons in *Peace of Mind* can be taught within a family and modified for different ages. Lessons are well suited to group teaching as well. Let's explore this a bit more below.

Adapting Peace of Mind to your needs

The *Peace of Mind* curriculum has been developed in the largest public elementary school in Washington D.C. since 2003. We initially wrote the curriculum to support other teachers in traditional school settings, as that is what we knew. However, we have recognized that the interest in and need for this work extend well beyond the traditional classroom. We have heard from many parents like you who are committed to supporting their children's social and emotional development in other settings, and who are looking for effective resources to help.

The *Peace of Mind Curriculum* is designed for an educator to pick up and use, with educator guidance throughout. We hope this will be of use to you! However, we recognize that additional guidance may be helpful in adapting the curriculum to your family's needs. We address common questions below.

Question 1: How do I prepare myself to teach Peace of Mind?

The first step in teaching Peace of Mind is to make a personal commitment to learning along with your children. The next step is to find the support you need. We have two suggestions:

1.Please consider taking our first two online training courses.

Our courses are available here: https://peace-of-mind-training-courses.teachable.com/
Each course takes about an hour to complete, and can be done at home on your own schedule. We think you'll find them useful and encouraging. They cost $25 each, or $40 for two.

> **Course 1: Introduction to Mindfulness and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)**. This course offers an overview of Mindfulness and SEL and explores why we teach these skills to young children. This course includes an overview of the supporting research.

Course 2: Getting Started with The Peace of Mind Curriculum. This is a step by step guide to beginning to teach this curriculum with helpful guidance, FAQs with the authors and sample lessons. Very helpful!

2. Consider your own mindfulness/contemplative practice

You do not have to already have a mindfulness practice of your own to begin teaching *Peace of Mind*. If you do, wonderful. If you don't, no worries, but please consider making a commitment to learning along with your children. Resources you may find useful in starting and supporting your own practice include:

Mindful Schools Fundamentals Course: please consider this for yourself if you are thinking about developing a mindfulness practice of your own.
https://www.mindfulschools.org/training/mindfulness-fundamentals/

Two books we like:
Mindfulness for Teachers; Simple Skills for Peace and Productivity in the Classroom by Dr. Patricia Jennings
The Way of Mindful Education: Cultivating Well-being in Teachers and Students by Daniel Rechtschaffen and Jon Kabat-Zinn

Apps we like that will help you with your own practice:

- Headspace.com
- 10%Happier.com
- Calm.com

You will find additional resources on our website: TeachPeaceofMind.org.

Question 2: How do I work Peace of Mind into our week, and what will I need?

How will Peace of Mind fit into the rhythm of your family's week? Setting up a regular time in your weekly schedule for "Peace Class" or "PoM" class can be very helpful for you and your children. For Early Childhood, 20-30 minutes a week for a *Peace of Mind* lesson is about right to begin. For older children, 30-45 minutes a week to focus on a *Peace of Mind* lesson may feel comfortable.

Setting up a dedicated space is also very helpful. Choose a place where you can all sit comfortably together in a quiet spot on a rug, on cushions, or in chairs that allow you to sit up straight. For some lessons, you might need space for everyone to be able to stretch out on the floor.

Please try to choose a time and place for your *Peace of Mind* class that is relatively quiet and where you are not very likely to be disturbed.

You will need a chime or a bell whose sound does not have another meaning in your family, (that is, don't use a bell you use to call people for dinner, for example).

You might like to have a talking stick or other object that shows that whoever is holding it is the one talking; everyone else is listening.

Other than this, you will need your curriculum guide(s), the storybooks required (listed in the front of each curriculum guide and on our website at https://teachpeaceofmind.org/buy-your-bundle-on-amazon/), and a willingness to dive in together.

Question 3: What if the children I am teaching are in different grades?

The Peace of Mind curriculum series meets the needs of children from age 4 to 11. The curriculum could work well within a single family and also could be very effective as a multi-family class. How

you decide to group your students will depend very much on your own particular children and situation. Here are some guidelines to consider:

The Peace of Mind Curriculum Series is divided into four books: The Core Curricula for Early Childhood, Grades 1-2, Grades 3-5 and also our newest Curriculum for Grades 4 and 5. *Peace of Mind* is a spiral curriculum: the same key concepts are addressed every year, but the depth and complexity increase with the children's emotional development.

We recommend that you use the Early Childhood book for your PreK and Kindergarten age children. If you have older children, consider inviting them to join you as assistants or partners for these lessons for younger children.

If you do also have older children, we suggest setting one time for Early Childhood practice (in which older children serve as helpers), and one time for Peace of Mind for your older children. Younger children might follow along with some of the practices for the older children, but may need alternative activities during this lesson time.

If you have children in Grades 1-5 in your family or group, and having separate class times for each curricula (Grades 1 and 2 and Grades 3-5) is not practical, you may choose to combine all of your students and use just one curriculum guide.

If you have a group that is older than early childhood but with most members still in the early elementary years (mostly ages 6-9), we recommend using the Core Curriculum for Grades 1-2. This curriculum introduces all of the themes that will be taught in the Grades 3-5 Curriculum, but does not include skits and focuses less on conflict resolution.

If your group skews older (mostly ages 7-11) , we recommend using the Core Curriculum for Grades 3-5. The concepts taught in these lessons will be appropriate for a multi-age teaching session, but you will need to adjust your expectations for the skills and practice of your children based on their age level.

Question 4: How do I engage my children in these lessons?

Early childhood and Grades 1 and 2 students seem to intuitively feel the benefits of mindfulness practice. Once you establish a regular time for Peace of Mind Class in the rhythm of your week, and create a feeling of safety around your practice together, you will find your students looking forward to the lessons.

For older kids who might be skeptical at first, you might focus on the fact that you are helping them to learn skills that are theirs for life, including the skills to notice and manage what you are feeling, to develop control over how you respond, to learn to build good strong friendships, to express yourself in ways that are kind but clear, and to be able to solve conflicts with friends and family without fighting. These skills often help kids feel happier, even when things aren't always going their way. They also give them a sense of agency: the ability to decide how they will respond to a certain situation, emotion or thought.

All curricula include additional suggestions for how to make mindfulness practice relevant and engaging for each age and stage.

Question 5: Will I need to adapt any parts of the program for homeschooling use?

We think you will find the majority of every lesson to be directly applicable to teaching and learning with your children at home. However, there are a few areas where you will need to adjust a bit.

Language

In the curriculum, all lessons begin with a Mindfulness Helper. Your child or one of your children would lead mindfulness practice, with your support, each time you have Peace of Mind class. In the script, the direction is "Consult your alphabetical roll list." Of course, you can disregard directions that are classroom focused, and move right into the lesson.

Please just substitute "child" or "your children" for "class" or "your students" whenever appropriate.

Kindness Pals

Every lesson ends with an important practice: Kindness Pals. Children are assigned a kindness pal each week. This pal might be someone they are getting along with well, someone they have only just met, someone they think they don't like, or even someone they are in conflict with. The point of kindness pals is to help children experience develop their capacity to be kind to all people, regardless of their relationship. We point out that you do not have to be friends with your Kindness Pal, you just need to be kind to them.

Early Childhood students have the chance to meet and talk with their pals during class time. Older children are asked to do something kind for their pal in the period of time between Peace of Mind sessions. During each session, older children have a chance to hear what kindness pals did for each other over the week since the last lesson, and new pals are assigned.

If you are teaching PoM within your family, you might match up family members, and perhaps invite extended family members to participate as kindness pals as well.

If you are gathering in a multi-family group for Peace of Mind class, you might assign pals among families. If the children do not see each other between Peace of Mind classes, their acts of kindness might be writing a letter to their pal about something they appreciate about them, or sending kind thoughts during a heartfulness meditation, or sending an email asking how their week is going.

Storybooks

The wonderful story books included in the curriculum have been carefully chosen after years of use. They have stood the test of time with hundreds of children and beautifully illustrate the relevant lesson themes.

There are no required storybooks for the Early Childhood Curriculum, but we do provide a rich list of optional storybooks. There are 10 required books for the Core Curriculum for Grades 1-2 and 6 required books for the Core Curriculum for Grades 3-5. We would like to point out that some of these stories take place in or around traditional school settings. These books are listed below, along with the lesson themes they support:

Core Curriculum for Grades 1-2

Week 9: *One of Us* by Peggy Moss (Being yourself, accepting others)
Week 16: *I Like Your Buttons* by Sarah Lamstein (the power of words to start a chain of kindness)
Week 17: *The Kindness Quilt* by Nancy E. Wallace (Notice how good it feels to show kindness to others)
Week 18*: The Invisible Boy* by Trudy Ludwig (the importance of showing kindness to others, especially those who are left out.

Core Curriculum for Grades 3-5

Week 6: *Steps and Stones* by Gail Silver (using breathing to handle strong emotions)
Week 19: *Sorry*! by Trudy Ludwig (the importance of apologizing)
Week 29*: Say Something* by Peggy Moss (How can you stand up for those who are being bullied?)

To prepare for these particular lessons, you might like to read these books ahead and consider parallel situations in your own family's experiences. You could invite your children to consider whether they have ever experienced the kinds of situations presented in these books and support them in noticing similarities to events in their own lives. If you cannot find similarities, these books might offer an opportunity to practice empathy for others, and to consider what you might do if you found yourself in a similar situation in the future.

You may also have favorite books that address these themes that you could substitute in these lessons. If you do, we'd love to know what they are!

Small group activities

There are lessons for Grades 1-2 and 3-5 that include activities, scenarios or skits that are written for 2 to 6 children. If your group is not large enough to fill all of the roles, consider inviting friends or extended family members to participate with your family. Inviting others to join offers an opportunity for your children to become teachers and leaders as they explain the lessons that they are learning and model the behavior they are practicing.

Here are the lessons to plan for in this regard:

Core Curriculum for Grades 1-2

Week 16 - The Kindness Chain: In this activity, students sit in a circle and pass compliments around the circle, first one way, and then the other. This is a lovely family exercise, and works well with a student group too.

In the following 4 lessons, the teacher will read aloud a story, and children will silently act out parts in the story that they have been assigned. Below is the number of parts for each story.
Week 22 - Jonah Flips his Lid (5 roles)
Week 25 - Learn about Conflict with Daisy and Cactus (2 roles)
Week 29 - Working it out with Louise and Jack (2 roles)
Week 30 - Working it out with Jahiem and Avi (2 roles)

Core Curriculum for Grades 3-5

This curriculum incorporates skits as an important tool to help children internalize the lessons they are learning. The first two skits are set at home. You may want to adapt the setting of the next three to be more familiar for your children.

Set at home
Week 12 - Rosie's Brain Skit (6 roles)

Week 17 and 21 - Scrabble vs. Monopoly Skits (6 roles)

Set at school
Week 18 - The Class Party (5 roles)
Week 26 - Exclusion on the Playground (5 roles)
Week 29 and 30 - Say Something Skits (5 roles)

Have fun!

Last question: What if I have more questions?

We have tried to anticipate here some of the questions that may arise for homeschooling families who dive into the *Peace of Mind Curriculum*. No doubt other questions will arise as well. *Peace of Mind*'s authors continue to teach the curriculum to over 900+ children a week and are continually learning. We love to share our experiences with other educators, and to hear about yours. Please let us know how we can help by contacting Cheryl at info@TeachPeaceofMind.org, and visit our website, TeachPeaceofMind.org, for educator and family resources.

But let us say, too, that we honor you as your child's first teacher. There is no one who knows your children better than you do. The more you bring your passion, creativity and presence to this curriculum, the more you will be able to make it your own. Have fun! And see where the journey takes you.

In peace,

Cheryl

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