

# PRACTICING MINDFULNESS

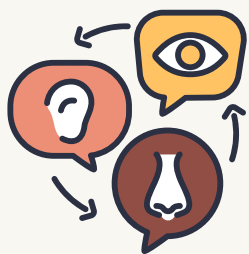
## What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness involves focusing on the present moment, whatever it may hold, rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. When we are fully present in the moment, without judgment, we can be more thoughtful, compassionate, and open-minded about the best course of action in that moment. Mindfulness can help parents and caregivers feel calmer, manage stress, and support and connect with their babies.

Here are a few mindfulness exercises you can try:

### Belly breathing

Sit or lay down in a comfortable position. Place one hand on your belly and the other on your chest. Inhale slowly through your nose and feel your belly rise. Then, exhale slowly through your mouth and notice your belly lower. Repeat this process three to five times.



### 5-4-3-2-1

Put your feet flat on the ground. Name five things you can see, four things you can hear, three sensations you can feel, two things you can smell, and one thing for which you are grateful.

### Single tasking

You do not need to have these exercises memorized to practice mindfulness. Luckily, you can incorporate mindfulness into any task to help you become more present. For example, direct your attention to the lifting and lowering of your feet when walking. Notice how the rest of your body feels as you take each step. Pay attention to your breathing pattern. Don't get frustrated if your mind begins to wander; simply bring your attention back to your body as needed.