

# Guide to Using Sesame Street's Mindfulness Practices

with Children in Home Settings



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## Mindfulness means...

really slowing down and paying attention to the world. This practice can help children and families feel happier, healthier, and more in control.

Mindfulness works best when it becomes a habit. This guide will help you—as a home visitor, family services staff member, or other

professional working in home settings—introduce these podcasts to families. You can use the podcasts during a home visit and offer reminders for families to use them each time you meet. You can also introduce these activities during a socialization visit with families. At your meeting, choose one of the podcasts below to guide your conversation.

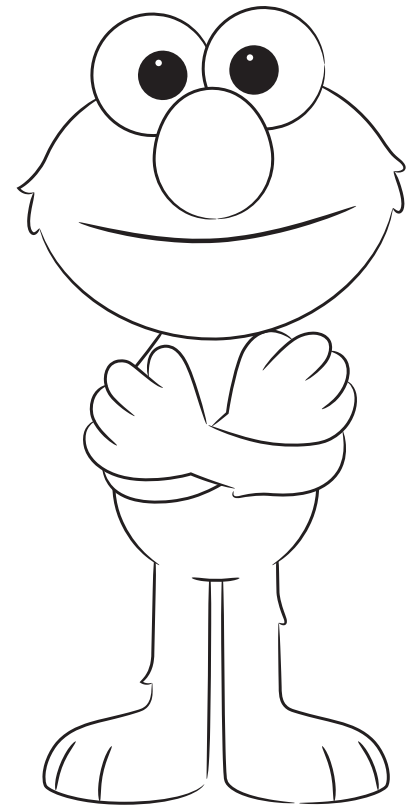
# Whole Body Listening with Elmo

## EXPLAIN HOW TO LISTEN AND DO

- **Say:** “This is a podcast you can listen to at home with your child. It will help children learn how to listen with their whole bodies. I’ll show you how to use it.”
- **Do:** Model how they can sing and move along with the song.
  - Sing “Ears are hearing what you have to say” and point to ears.
  - Sing “Eyes are watching what you do today” and point to eyes.
  - Sing “Voices are quiet” and put finger to lips.
  - Sing “With calm bodies too” and give yourself a hug.
  - Sing “This is how our whole bodies listen to you.”
- **Discuss:** After listening, say “Your family can use whole-body listening any time! It can be especially useful when someone needs to focus and pay attention. You can also use whole-body listening as a way to help children or family members calm down.”

## REPEAT AND EXTEND

- Explain that whole-body listening works best when it becomes a routine. After you practice whole-body listening together, ask them to try again with their child while you listen. Once they are done, ask “What are some regular times that you could try this?” Help the family make a checklist so they can get into the habit of doing whole-body listening during regular routines and activities.
- Tell families that by learning the song, grown-ups and children can sing it together when it’s time to listen, focus, or learn how to stay calm. Keep in mind that some people may be uncomfortable singing, so you can show them how to say the words instead of singing them.



SCAN AND LISTEN!

# Self-love with Grover

## EXPLAIN HOW TO LISTEN AND DO

- **Say:** “It’s really important to help your child learn how to love themselves. This podcast will give you ways to practice talking to yourselves in kind and friendly ways!”
- **Do:** Model how families will listen to and move along with the podcast.
  - Say “I love me!” and give yourself a hug.
  - Say “I am kind!” and place your hand on your heart.
  - Say “I am brave!” with your hands on your hips.
  - Say “I am growing every day!” while making a big muscle.
  - One more time, say “I love me!” and give yourself a hug.
- **Discuss:** After listening, offer suggestions for other ways to show self-love. Say “Make a habit of asking your child what they like about themselves. You may need to model the words for your child with your own example, like ‘I like myself when I help other people. It makes me feel good.’” Families can try this with their child every day.



## REPEAT AND EXTEND

- Suggest different ways a family can use the words “I love me, I am kind, I am brave, I am growing every day!” daily. Maybe it’s the first thing they say when they wake up, before starting their day, or it’s a bedtime reflection.
- Tell families that self-love is very important for them, too. Explain that when they do these activities, grown-ups and children alike can name things they love about themselves. To take care of children, we also have to take care of ourselves.



# Notice with Cookie Monster

## EXPLAIN HOW TO LISTEN AND DO

- **Say:** “Helping your child learn to notice details in the world is great for their developing mind. This podcast will help you teach your child to notice what is going on around them.”
- **Do:** Listen together, and model how families can listen and do.
  - Encourage children to make “binoculars” or “glasses” with their hands.
  - Say “Wiggle your fingers when you see something red!”
  - Say “Stomp your feet when you see something blue!”
  - Say “Blink your eyes when you see something yellow!”
- **Discuss:** After listening, model how to continue the noticing game with a child. Practice noticing different colors, shapes, and textures. Ask the family to name a few places where they can practice the noticing game, such as the grocery store, the park, or while waiting in a long line!

## REPEAT AND EXTEND

- Explain that families can listen to the noticing podcast again and again to kick off a noticing game.
- Explain that families can use noticing binoculars anywhere. Explain that it’s especially great to play outdoors because there are tons of things to notice in the natural world!



SCAN AND LISTEN!

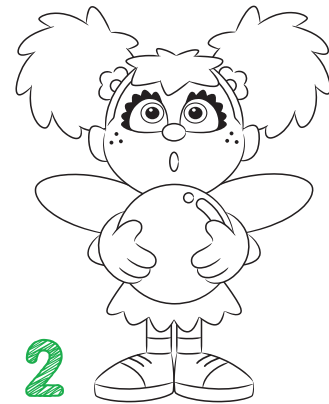
# Bubble Breathing with Abby

## EXPLAIN HOW TO LISTEN AND DO

- **Say:** “A deep breathing routine is a great tool to have in your parenting toolbox.” Tell families this podcast will give them a wonderful deep-breathing routine.
- **Do:** Listen together, and model how families can listen and do.
  - 1 Say “Put your hands over the bubble in your belly.”
  - 2 Say “Breathe in and make the bubble bigger.”
  - 3 Say “Breathe out and make the bubble smaller.”
- **Discuss:** Explain that they can use bubble breathing anywhere. Tell families that it’s a great tool to use any time during the day, either in challenging moments, or just to help focus when they are going to do something as a family.

## REPEAT AND EXTEND

- Explain that practicing bubble breathing might help children when they are having big feelings. If children practice this when they are calm, they will know what to do when they have a big feeling. They can use bubble breathing to help focus attention or even to just prepare for a new activity.
- Remind those in your care that we can all have big emotions. Doing bubble breathing together in difficult moments can help everyone calm down, and the bubble-breathing technique is great for grown-ups to do on their own.



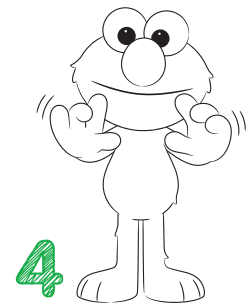
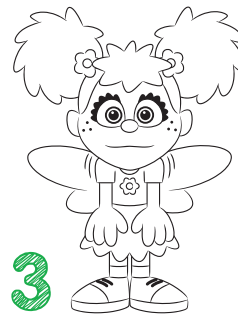
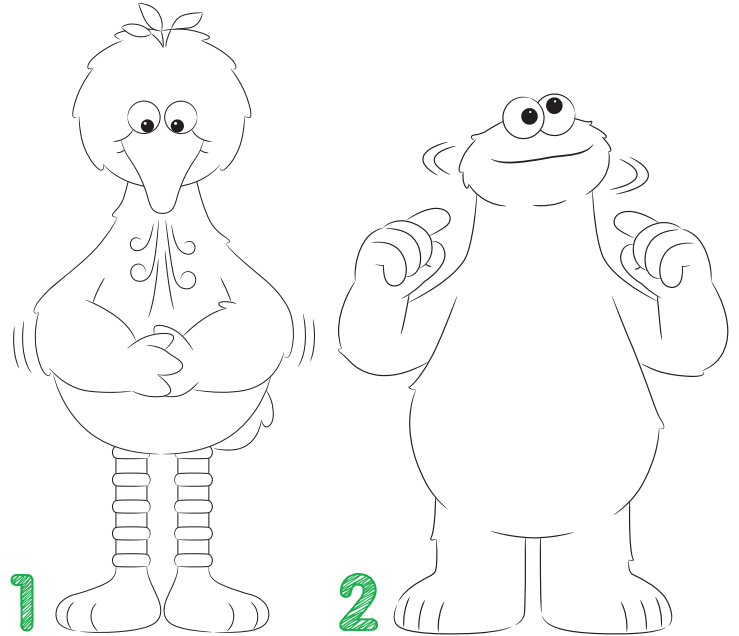
# Body Scan with Big Bird

## EXPLAIN HOW TO LISTEN AND DO

- **Say:** “A simple way to be mindful is to check in with different parts of your body.”
- **Do:** Model how to follow the instructions for Big Bird’s body scan.
  - 1 Take three belly breaths together.
  - 2 Say hello to your head, and circle it three times in each direction.
  - 3 Say hello to your shoulders, and squeeze them up and down.
  - 4 Say hello to your hands, and squeeze them open and shut.
  - 5 Say hello to your toes, and wiggle them.
- **Discuss:** Tell families that children can suggest body parts and ways to move them, too. Tell families they can make it a game, naming parts of the body to say hello to and to move in different ways.

## REPEAT AND EXTEND

- Tell families that the body-scan podcast is a great tool for calming down or focusing. Families can listen to it together before bedtime to help relax and get ready to go to sleep.
- Body scans are a great on-the-go activity. Tell families that they can have their child do a body scan while waiting for a friend to come over to play, driving in the car, or any time they are transitioning to a new place or activity.



# Peaceful Planning:



**Building Routines.** Help families understand that mindfulness is all about repetition and routine. The podcasts are short, and families can listen to them at different times throughout the day. You can even help families choose a regular time to practice mindfulness.



**Creating a Mindful Corner.** Help the parent or family member pick a specific place in the home that can be a “Mindful Corner.” Together with their child, they can decorate the space, make it comfy with pillows and blankets, and make it a cozy place to practice mindfulness together.



**Encouraging Mindfulness for All.** Explain to families that even though these are Sesame Street characters, the mindfulness lessons are great for everyone! Whole-body listening, self-love, noticing, deep breathing, and body scans are all common mindfulness practices. Go ahead, use them as part of your daily routine!

