

# Teaching Resources | Teacher Training



## Calming Emotions The Muddy Way!

BEE GREEN AND ONLY PRINT IF YOU HIVE TO :)

### Preparation and safety

Each season, nature will bring you the resources that you need. However, if you do not have a natural setting or lack certain natural items, try to collect these in advance of your sessions. Make a habit of going out for a walk at weekends - you'll improve your own physical and mental health, which is good for you, and you'll collect your missing items. You can also encourage parents to get collecting through your newsletters! Make your world one big healthy, Muddy community. You will get an idea of the types of resources that you need each season. The only resource that you may need to buy is air-drying clay.

Weather wise, we will provide you with ideas for all types of weather. The only time that we advise you NOT to go outside is on extremely windy days and during thunderstorms. Otherwise, there's no excuses - get yourself out there!

Always risk assess with the children present. As you enter the natural environment, spend 30 seconds talking about the dangers that the weather conditions may present, such as slippery surfaces and hot sun. If possible, offer the children a solution to any issues, such as seeking out a safe, shady area if the sun is too hot. Keep sticks low and only use stones no bigger than the palm of the children's hands. remind them to use feet first then hands when collecting from the floor and wash hands thoroughly after.

Please be aware that all guidance and resources suggested within this guide are carried out at your own risk. We stipulate that all Muddy Puddle Teacher resources and guidance must be used within the context of your own company policies, procedures, guidance, risk assessments and insurance. We do not, in any way, suggest that you follow our guidance if it does not meet the requirements of your own company policies, procedures, guidance, risk assessments or insurance. It is your responsibility to ensure that any activities or resources used are suitable for the individual needs of the children within your care, including any needs related to age, health or allergies.

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# Bringing The Outside In - Ways To Calm And Balance Emotions The Muddy Way...



## How Does Breathing Help Us To Be Calm?

Breathing is so important for staying calm. Not only does it help send more oxygen around our bodies, but it also brings us back to the present and allows us to tune in to the rhythm of our bodies. When a child can feel that rhythm they can begin to feel more reassured; their breath is always there and they can tune in to it whenever they want to. It's a comforting feeling for them to remember. Children can also focus on the rhythm of their breath - this is a way of distracting their minds from anything that is causing them to feel anxious or unsettled. In order for any of us to use mindfulness and to lead more mindful lives, we need to be in touch with our senses and focus on these feelings so that we become more present and therefore more at peace. Luckily, children often love sensory exploration so they often find this easier than adults! Here are some ideas on how you can use some breathing exercises the Muddy way! It will help to show you how you can engage in some simple mindful activities that will help your children to focus on their senses and wash any worries away. You may even find you enjoy these just as much!

## Breathing Leaves

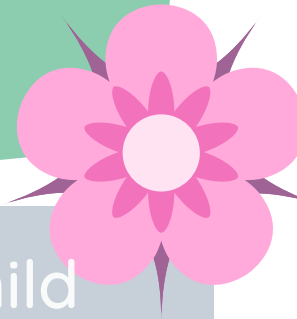
This is a great little activity you can do by simply using the air around us! You may want to start this activity off by going on a little bit of an exploration with the children, finding and collecting some leaves. It is good to use a fairly wide-spanned leaf for this (think hand-span size). Once they have collected their leaf, sit down with them somewhere quiet (perhaps in a circle if this suits your setting) and tell them to just stare at the leaf. What does it look like? Look at the beautiful colours? Is it all the same shape? Now get them to breathe on the leaf. Now using the leaf, stroke their arms and body with the leaf; for a heightened sensory experience, they may want to close their eyes. If your children are too sensitive to stroke the leaf on their bodies, they could do this on top of their clothes or they could just hold the leaf in their hands (like a sandwich), closing their eyes and feeling the touch of the leaf. Now take a big breath in through their nose and out through their mouth and blow on the leaf. Watch what happens to it - How does it move? You could practise blowing on the leaf quickly and slowly. Now twirl the leaf as you blow (again you may want to get someone to twirl it for them as they blow, or even blow on the leaf for them as they hold it). As long as they are watching the leaf, they are being mindful and they are focusing! Now using one finger, they are going to trace the veins of the leaf, and simply and slowly trace the veins up and down. You may want to carry their finger over as you do this or show them on your leaf. Remember doing this slowly and watching as your finger moves is key to this being mindful. Now after they have done this they can re-start tracing the leaf's veins, but this time breathing in as they move up and breathing out as they move their finger down. Do this for the whole leaf and changing hands after they have completed one set. This can be repeated as often as you feel is suitable for your setting.



## Letting Go.....

There are many ways that we can help children to let go of their worries through mindfulness. A lot involves visualisation and nurturing children's wonderful imaginations and creativity. Here is an idea I have used in mindfulness classes - you can try with your children to help them to let go of their anxieties and, in turn, it will help them to find calm. There are some adaptations to this that I'm adding to make this even more Muddy! :) You can choose what feels more suitable for your child and their needs. Begin by taking some deep breaths. To help your child focus on their breath, they can place one hand on their stomach and one hand on their chest and just feel their breath moving. After they have taken a few deep breaths, breath normally just feeling and being in tune with the movement of the breath. Ask your child to close their eyes (or look down) and imagine a river in their mind's eye. This river can be whatever they want it to be- it could be a loud rushing river, it could be a calming babbling brook, it could be silver with sparkles or unicorns in it. It can be whatever your child wants it to be! Give them time to imagine this and they can share their image if they want to. Now tell them to imagine they are sitting on the grassy bank next to their river and they are watching the water flow past. Imagine they are picking a pebble up and hold it in their hand. Here, they can actually have a pebble which may be easier for children to imagine and focus. Holding the pebble in their hands tightly, tell your child to think of all the worries they are feeling or anything that is making them feel unsettled, fearful, scared, worried or angry. They can think of anything they want to let go of! They do not need to say these out loud, but they can imagine that the thoughts are travelling from their mind down their arms in to their hands and on to the pebble! If they want to, they can whisper the worries to the pebble. Once they have done this, they are going to drop the pebble in to river and watch it sink. Their worries have gone and will never come back, because they can not return once they have got to the bottom of the river! With this part, you can get them to open their eyes and drop the pebble on to the floor if they have a real pebble. Now, this can be adapted to actually use water. Do this in a river, pond or paddling pool, or even a tray with some water in- the principle is still the same. You can also do this but use a stick or a leaf and imagine it floating down the river. Remind your child that water only moves in one direction, so the stick can not come back to you! If using real river or stream, you can see this ( a bit like Pooh Sticks). Children can keep the worry pebble that they used in the meditation and keep it safe in a little box or pouch. Every time they feel a bit worried, they can whisper it to their pebble- so they can always imagine this in their minds whenever they need to. This is also great for adults too! Try it together! :)

“The best way to make children good is to make them happy.” - Oscar Wilde



Does your child have ASD and struggle with the outdoors? We have Muddy packs to help!