



MINDFUL CREATIONS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN WITH SLEEP

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WHAT ARE MINDFUL CREATION?

Mindful creations are simply things that we create when fully focused in the moment. When we do this, we use some of the same skills as meditation. This brings with it many of the benefits that meditation does, such as:



- Releasing stress and anxiety
- Expressing feelings that cannot easily be put into words
- Increasing self-awareness
- Improving concentration
- Inner peace and calm

The mindful creations below can also aid with restful sleep and most of them are made with things that you can find around the house. Remember that there is no right or wrong – it is not what it looks like is important – more the process of making it, and how you decide to use it to support you or your child that matters! The instructions are designed for you to find a way that works best for you, with what you have in the house.

GLITTER JAR

Benefits: Encourages focus on the present moment (taking thoughts away from emotions), calm breathing brings on relaxation response in body.

You will need:

- Plastic Bottle
- Glitter
- Water
- Cellotape
- Optional clear glue or baby oil (to make the glitter fall more slowly or like a lava lamp)
- Optional extras e.g. food colouring, Lego pieces, beads, screws, Mini-figures, glow in the dark stars



Method:

1. Take a clear plastic bottle. Pour hot tap water (mostly) and glue/oil (a small amount) into the bottle. Put the top on and give it a shake.
2. Add 1-2 tablespoons of glitter into the bottle. Add optional extras if you would like.
3. Screw the lid back on and seal it with either glue or Cellotape.

When to use it: Before bedtime to calm the body and when emotionally heightened

How to use it:

Shake the bottle up and focus on the glitter as it falls. Try to slow the breathing down as you are watching. You might even slowly count how long it takes for the glitter to settle again.

WORRY BOX



Benefits: Encourages worries to be shared, releasing worries rather than keeping them in, encourages solution focused problem solving

You will need:

- A box, such as a shoebox
- Something to decorate the box, such as felts, paints, coloured paper / tissue paper

Method:

1. Get the box and decorate it (any way you would like).
2. Give the box a name, such as 'Worry Box' (or any creative name that works for you!)
3. You might cut a hole (a bit like a money box) in the top – this is to post the worries through.

When to use it: Some families might want to do this daily, others might have particular days when you check the worry box.

How to use it:

Agree where to place the worry box at home and how often to check it. Worries for any family members can be drawn or written, then posted into the box. Conversations to support talking about worries might include “Does this worry belong to me or someone else?” “Is this something I can control or not?” “What or who could help me with this?” “How will I know when things are starting to get better?”

BREATHING STICK

Benefits: Movement helps to focus the breathing, small enough to carry in pocket if needed

You will need:

- A pipe cleaner
- 5 beads



Method:

1. Get the pipe cleaner and twist the end (so no beads fall off).
2. Thread 5 beads onto the pipe cleaner.
3. Twist the other end of the pipe cleaner to secure the beads on the pipe cleaner.

Alternatively, you could make this with 5 pasta tubes and string – it would look like a pasta necklace.

When to use it: When calming down as part of the bedtime routine.

How to use it:

Focus on long slow breathing – the long exhalation will bring on a relaxation response in the body. As you breathe in, move a bead/pasta tube along with the pipe cleaner. As you breathe out, move your fingers to the next bead. As you breathe in, move the next bead along with the pipe cleaner, repeating the process until all 5 beads/pasta shapes have moved to the opposite side.

EYE PILLOW



Benefits: Gentle pressure on the eyelids stimulates the vagus nerve, calming the body, the pillow makes it easier to shut out lights, lavender can help ease headaches, anxiety and insomnia

You will need:

- A sock
- Rice or oats
- Optional - lavender (dried)

Method:

- 1.If using lavender, mix lavender and oats/rice in bowl (if not, just skip this stage).
- 2.Open sock and pour rice/oats in.
- 3.Tie a knot in the top of the sock or secure with an elastic band.

When to use it: before bedtime or during quiet time / relaxation.

How to use it:

Lie down with eye pillow over eyes for a few minutes. You might lie quietly, listen to your favourite song or a story.

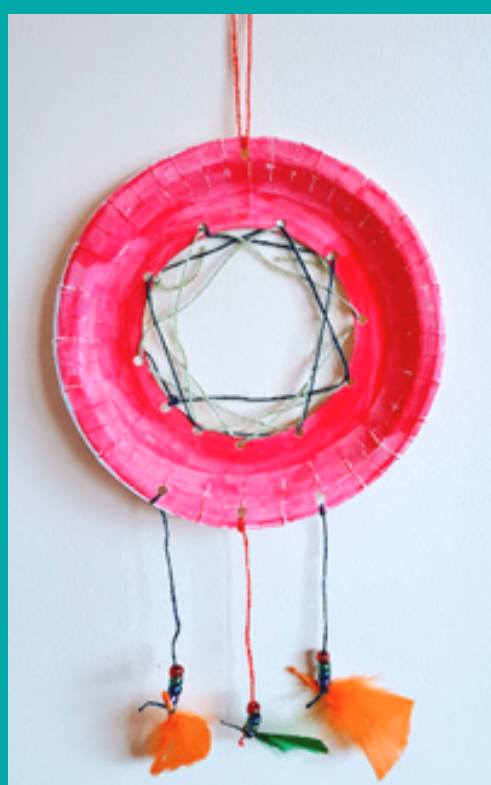
Notice whether you feel different after using the eye pillow for a few minutes.

DREAMCATCHER

Benefits: Offers emotional comfort from bad dreams

You will need:

- Paper plate
- Wool/string
- Paint /felts
- Scissors
- Hole-punch or something to make a hole in the plates e.g. scissors / fork / pencil
- Beads / pasta shapes
- Feathers (these could be made out of paper if you don't have any real feathers)



Method:

1. Get a paper plate and cut a circle out of the middle – this should leave a doughnut type shape.
2. Decorate the doughnut-shape of the paper plate, coloring or adding stickers.
3. Hole-punch about 12 holes evenly around the inside rim of the paper plate.
4. Take the wool and thread it through the holes into the middle of the plate, making a 'web' - use your creativity to design when doing this!
5. Hole-punch some holes at the bottom of the plate and attach some pieces of wool. Thread beads/pasta shapes onto the wool. Tie feathers at the end of the wool.
6. Attach a piece of wool at the top of the paper plate to hang it up.

How to use it:

Hang it up by the bed and explain how some people believe that dreamcatchers help your sleep by catching the 'bad' dreams in the web, with good dreams passing through the dreamcatcher.

JOURNALING



Activities such as **gratitude journals** and sleep journals can also be useful. In a gratitude journal, we reflect on things that we are thankful for throughout the day. This could include different activities, food, people we have spent time with – any small things we have enjoyed throughout the day. This can **help children reflect on positive experiences**, before bedtime.

In dream journals, children write or draw their dreams out when they wake up. This can also help to release feelings.

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