

The Magic of Mindfulness

During one of my home visits more than a year ago with a five-year-old named Sam we were outside on a nature hike. Sam had some very very high expectations for the length of our hike and the location of our hike.

Sam had planned for an all-day hike deep into the mountains. When I wasn't able to spend the entire day and didn't have the appropriate footwear for the hike he was extremely disappointed and mad. He took off into the woods on his own and refused to return. Once mom and I were able to corral him, I decided that we needed to do a mindful activity to help settle all of us down.

We all sat down right in the driveway and I had everyone close their eyes, I asked everyone to listen really hard and tell me what they hear. Sam immediately calmed down sharing that he heard a plane and birds, then he noticed the wind and finally the creek trickling nearby. We moved on to our other senses, how does the driveway feel under us, what do you smell then opened our eyes and talks about what we saw.



Afterwards mom was curious because she said that she had never seen anything work that well and calm him down before she was going to start implementing mindful activities into their daily life. Now they do mindful practices at home. She realized that it is a good starting point in discussing feelings, something they hadn't normally done as a family before.

Flash forward to the present day, Sam has graduated from our program and he's now a first grader. He has struggled with transitions and executive functioning skills at school and has been meeting with the school counselor. On a visit with his younger sibling, mom shared that the counselor at school asked what Sam does at home to help him calm down. Sam quickly answered that as soon as he gets off the bus he sits on his driveway and listen to the sounds around him: the birds, the wind, the airplanes, the creek, before he goes into the house. Mom said he does it every day to help him transition from school to home life and that it's a coping mechanism, he learned from that first mindful activity we did together. That one moment, that one suggestion has become something he uses every day. As a home visitor we get to be a part of creating moments of everyday magic in the lives of families.

Story shared by Chris Johnson, Family Education Program Coordinator - Mountain Resource Center, Parents as Teachers