

# Focusing on the Positives.



**Care Pack**  
5–7 years



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# Introduction

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As we all move through these challenging times together, parents, carers and teachers have the added responsibility of supporting the young people in their care as they grapple with rapid change and uncertainty. Mindfulness is an active, practical and appropriate response to the sense of overwhelm many of us are currently feeling.

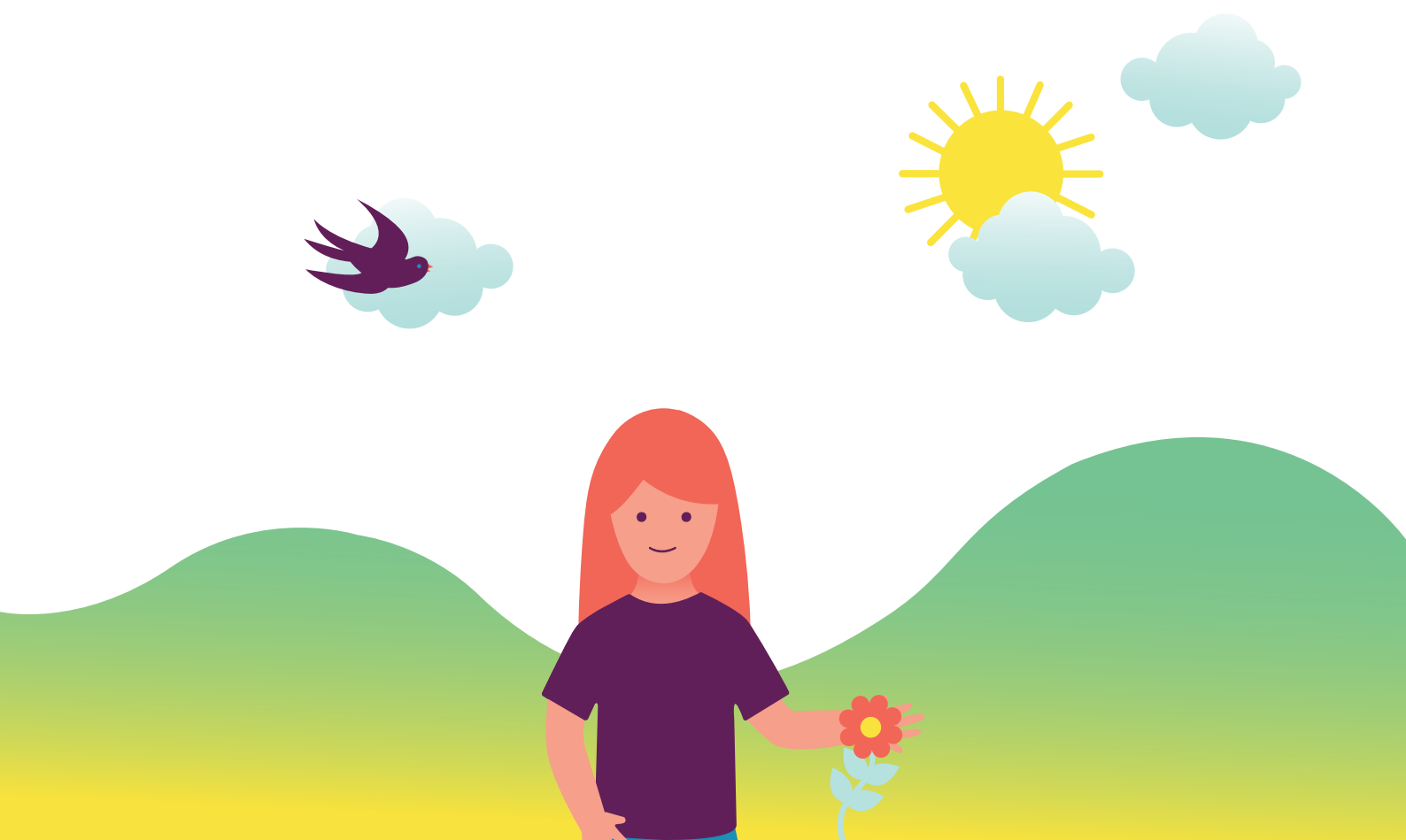
Mindfulness has been practised for centuries and in many different cultures around the world. Academic research shows that when we pay attention to what is happening in the present moment, with openness and curiosity, and without judgement, we activate many wellbeing benefits including higher self-awareness, higher emotional regulation and reduced stress. It can also be a very useful tool that allows us to focus on the positive elements of life as they happen.

Integrating mindfulness into everyday life with the children in our care can have profound benefits for both adult and child. Smiling Mind offers a range of engaging evidence-based experiences and activities designed by wellbeing educators. You are encouraged to experiment and explore the wide range of meditations and activities with your child.

This third module, Focusing On The Positives contains four specific mindfulness topics to progress through with your child to assist them to turn towards the positive, especially in times of challenge:

- Stepping Forward to School
- Taking in the Good – Savouring and Gratitude
- Optimism
- Growth Mindset

These four topics combine to deliver a comprehensive toolkit to assist in supporting and boosting the emotional wellbeing of your child.



Here is a step by step guide to get the best out of this module designed specifically for 5–7 year olds:

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**1**

**Take a few minutes to read the topic overview written for parents, carers and teachers.**

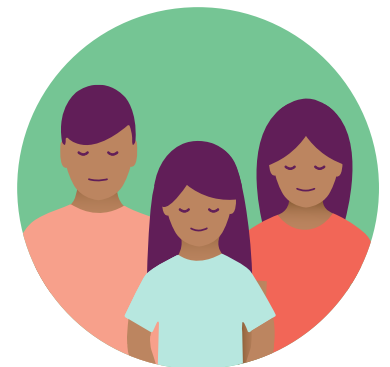
- This will orient you to the purpose and intention of each topic and set up some background for conversations with your child.



**2**

**Listen to the mindfulness meditation with your child in a quiet place without distraction.**

- Spend a few minutes afterwards inviting your child to share their experience and their thoughts and feelings following the meditation.
- Share your own experience, thoughts and feelings with your child.



**3**

**Ask your child to select one of the activities at the back of the book.**

- Use the activity to collaborate and continue the conversation.

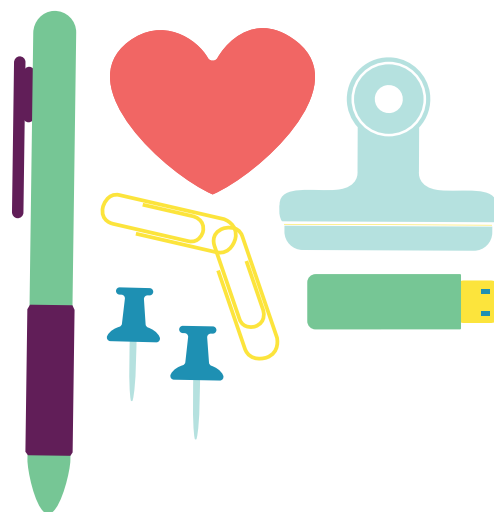


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# Stepping Forward To School

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As parents, carers and teachers, we have found ourselves in the midst of uncertainty during the global health crisis. As we resume our regular school routines, a swirl of mixed emotions is completely normal and to be expected. Some of us can't wait to be back in the social field of a classroom. Others have relished the time at home and found it a welcome respite from the busyness of everyday life. Making a successful transition will be assisted by stepping forward mindfully and with purpose.

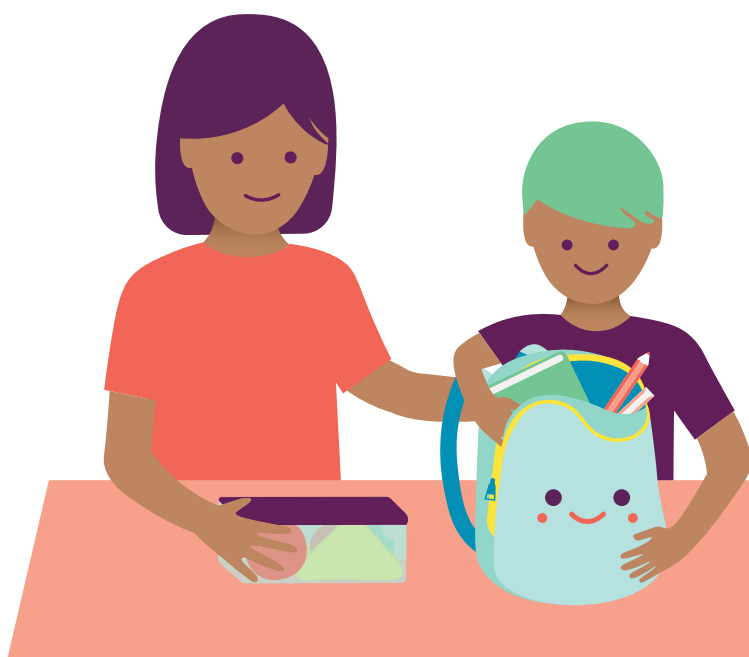


A common response to uncertainty is to imagine all kinds of possible scenarios playing out. Our children may feel worried about the virus, for example. They may also find it difficult to be separated from parents and carers who have supported them through this journey so far within the familiar surrounds of home. This is where mindfulness can play a role. When we attend to the present moment, we begin to become fully aware of how we are feeling and what we are doing. For the young people in our care, their ability to learn and grow depends upon being able to develop this essential skill.

Our children observe us closely and take their cues from us, especially in times of uncertainty. Now is the time for us to model stepping forward and re-establishing routines. What might this look like? We can purposefully create time and space for children to express thoughts and feelings and open the door to gentle and supportive conversations. Regular opportunities for mindfulness as a shared activity will bring benefit to both adults and children.

Together with our children, we can gently remind ourselves to bring our full awareness to the present moment – which is always fresh and ready for us to attend to with curiosity. In doing so, young people develop a greater capacity to focus on where they are and what they are doing. This can lead to cultivating sustained attention back in the classroom.

Stepping forward to school may bring challenges after extended time at home and as adults, we can support young people as they make this transition. Alongside conversations and reassurance, mindfulness practice will keep us in the present moment as we travel the journey together. After sharing the mindfulness practice together, have a conversation about how it felt and how mindfulness can help to build awareness. After taking time to share thoughts and feelings, we suggest downloading the companion activities appropriate to this topic and inviting your 5–7 year old to choose one as an added activity. These resources can be found towards the end of the booklet. While the activities are designed so they can be done without adult support, we encourage conversation and collaboration.





Listen to a mindfulness meditation.  
A good one for this topic is:  
In the Car

App Location:

- All Programs
- Families
- On the Go
- In the Car

Web App Link:

<https://app.smilingmind.com.au/sessions/475/1356/2774/>



Continue the conversation using  
one of the activity sheets at the  
back of this booklet:

### Stepping Forward to School

This activity encourages children to focus on the positive aspects of returning to school and reflect on some of the emotions they are currently feeling. It will assist children to be curious about how they are feeling.

### Welcome Back

This activity takes a big picture look at returning to school and asks children to imagine reconnecting with people, places and things they enjoy. It will assist children to focus on the good aspects of school.



Deepen the conversation  
by exploring these questions  
together. Remember, there are  
no wrong answers:

How can we support each other as we get back into our  
school routine?

Let's share some of the feelings we are both having around  
returning to school after this long break.

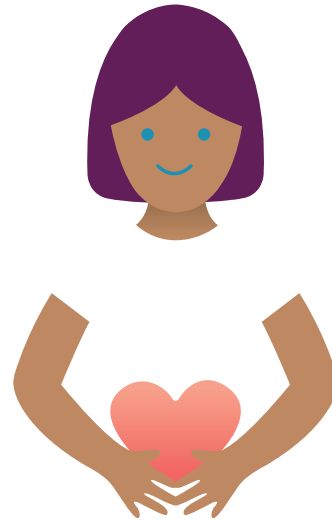
Where are your favourite places at school?  
Tell me about them.

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# Taking In The Good: Gratitude and Savouring

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Taking in the good doesn't always come naturally. The human brain is like velcro for negative experiences and teflon for positive. Scientists call this the negativity bias. The stickiness of negative experiences was adaptive and has helped ensure our survival as a species. Once upon a time we needed to be on the constant look out for threats and danger. There are fewer dangers in our world, but the hardwiring of our brains hasn't changed.



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Cultivating gratitude and savouring are ways to velcro the positive. They can serve as an antidote to the natural tendency to take the positives in our lives for granted. They help us get full bang for buck from the good stuff.

Gratitude is being thankful for the good things in our lives. When we appreciate people, places and experiences, we begin to pay more attention to what brings us joy.

Savouring is all about deliberately focusing on enjoyable experiences by tuning into them mindfully and with appreciation. We can savour looking forward to a special experience, as it is unfolding in the moment, or later as we recall it in our minds.

Gratitude and savouring are essential elements of mindfulness. Mindfulness helps us to train our ability to focus on one thing at a time. This present moment awareness is a way to tune into our minds and bodies and become more aware of positive experiences in our lives. When we focus on feeling grateful, our bodies may fill with warm and happy emotions. Areas of the brain associated with connection and building relationships are activated. Savouring helps us to take in and really absorb the positive details of an experience.

As parents, carers and teachers, we can model this by focusing our own attention on the positives in our lives. When we are grateful, feelings of joy can increase both within us, and in our immediate environment. The more we savour and practise gratitude, the happier we tend to be.

Children can be gently encouraged to practise gratitude and savouring on a daily basis. As they do this, they begin to take in the good and notice the little moments of joy that can be easy to miss.

Engaging in mindfulness practice with the children in our care provides a calming and collaborative shared time. After sharing the mindfulness practice together, have a conversation about how it felt and how mindfulness can help to build awareness. After taking time to share thoughts and feelings, we suggest downloading the companion activities appropriate to this topic and inviting your 5–7 year old to choose one as an added activity. These resources can be found towards the end of the booklet. While the activities are designed so they can be done without adult support, we encourage conversation and collaboration.



Listen to a mindfulness meditation.  
A good one for this topic is:  
Gratitude

App Location:

- All Programs
- Kids & Youth
- 07 – 09 Year olds
- Mindfulness 207 – Gratitude
- Gratitude

Web App Link:

<https://app.smilingmind.com.au/sessions/16/97/97/>



Continue the conversation using  
one of the activity sheets at the  
back of this booklet:

### Gratitude Tree

This activity presents an ongoing gratitude project which can be added to over time. It will encourage children to actively look for moments to be grateful for so they can be added to the tree.

### Savouring Chain

This activity encourages children to build a savouring routine, actively noticing and recording positive moments in the past, present and future. Doing this regularly can cultivate greater awareness of the good.



Deepen the conversation  
by exploring these questions  
together. Remember, there are  
no wrong answers:

Tell me about what it feels like to really look forward  
to something?

How can we make sure we notice the little moments in every  
day that make us feel good?

How does it feel inside when we are thankful and happy?

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# Optimism

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When we think optimistically, we often positively place ourselves in the future. Optimism is a future minded emotion that assists us to build a positive perspective about something that is yet to happen. When we are optimistic, we expect good things to happen to us, even when we face challenges.

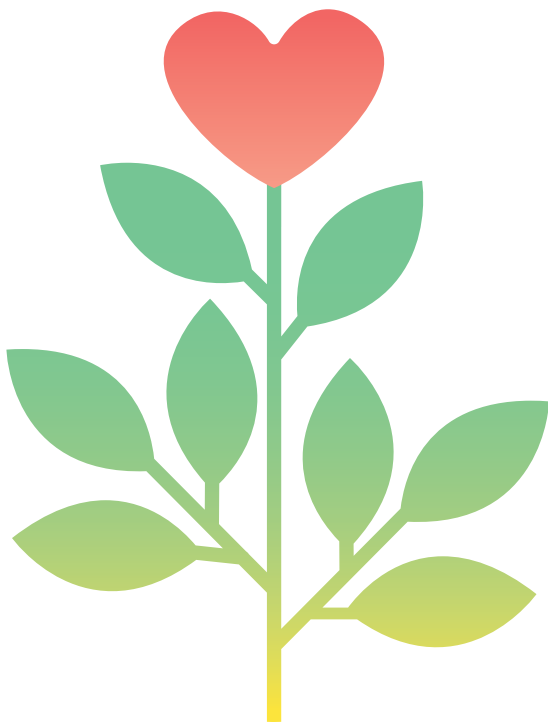


Research shows that when we are optimistic, we are more able to cope with stressful happenings in life. We tend to take a problem-solving approach and mindfully plan our way forward. Alongside this behaviour, we begin to see the best in a situation and move towards the positive in our thoughts, emotions and behaviours.

Optimism is a strength we can build and practise from early childhood onwards. Children in our care look to trusted adults and model what they see, hear and experience. Being aware of our own thoughts and emotions is therefore very important. When we model a positive outlook, we demonstrate an ability to mindfully navigate challenges effectively without becoming stuck in the negative implications. Children witness this perspective taking and learn to consider the same positively oriented actions in their own lives.

Cultivating an optimistic outlook begins with mindfulness. Through awareness and attention, we can begin to notice our thinking patterns. Acknowledging and supporting positive thoughts and acknowledging and then letting go negative thoughts is a great place to start. This does not mean that we pay no attention to the negative or challenging aspects of life. Rather it is about gently unhooking ourselves from negative thought patterns in order to provide room for a more optimistic outlook.

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Listen to a mindfulness meditation.  
A good one for this topic is:  
Gratitude

App Location:

- All Programs
- Classroom
- Primary Year 2 – The Mindfulness Curriculum
- Lesson 9 – Optimism
- PRACTISE – Catching Butterflies 2

Web App Link:

<https://app.smilingmind.com.au/sessions/311/678/>



Continue the conversation using  
one of the activity sheets at the  
back of this booklet:

### Catching Butterfly Moments

This activity encourages children to mindfully look around them and catch the lovely and hopeful moments in life. It can assist in teaching children how to look for the good.

### Unhook and Swim On

Helping children to see that whilst every day has challenges, we can mindfully move towards the positive moments, is very important. This activity builds a strategy of changing direction when we get stuck in our thoughts.



Deepen the conversation  
by exploring these questions  
together. Remember, there are  
no wrong answers:

How can we move towards positive thinking when we get stuck with a problem?

How do you think positive thoughts help us to learn and grow?

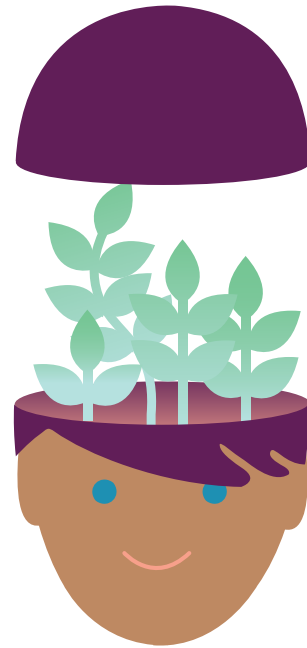
Can you think of a time when you were feeling negative and then were able to change direction?

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# Growth Mindset

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Growth Mindset is the belief that with effort, we can train our brains to grow and develop. We can build the neural connections in our brains because they are neuroplastic – able to develop and change across our lifespans. The more we challenge our brains, the more neural connections we make, leading to a smarter and stronger brain. Growth mindset is one of the essential elements of mindfulness. Mindfulness is all about paying attention to the present moment with openness, curiosity and without judgement.



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When we practise mindfulness, we create much needed space within our minds to learn and grow. Combining mindfulness and growth mindset helps us to develop a mind that is open to possibilities and challenges. It enables us to cultivate what's referred to as 'beginner's mind', a mind that is willing to see everything as if it was for the first time. A mind that is completely available to the moment. Think of a scientist making a new discovery, or a child examining a new insect or playing in puddles for the first time. This is captured nicely in an old zen proverb:

**“In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert’s mind there are but a few”.**

For many of us, focusing on what we don't know or can't do can become an unhelpful pattern of thinking. Some of us may also find it challenging to do things in a new way. We call this a fixed mindset. Building a growth mindset does the opposite, expanding our awareness to how we can try things out and improve through learning, even if we make mistakes along the way.

As parents, carers and teachers, we can model a growth mindset by focusing our own attention on the possibilities for growth and development in our own lives. When we demonstrate that we are able to learn from our mistakes and challenges. We show the children in our care that giving up is not productive and things improve with effort and persistence. Always aiming to do our best, is a key attitude to model. This can be particularly important if you have a tendency towards needing perfection.

Children can be gently encouraged to have an open mind on a daily basis. As they do this, they are more likely to persist and believe in themselves. Cultivating a growth mindset begins with mindfulness as we pay attention to the present moment with curiosity, tuning in to all it has to offer us.

Engaging in mindfulness practice with the children in our care provides a calming and collaborative shared time. After sharing the mindfulness practice together, have a conversation about how it felt and how mindfulness can help to build awareness. After taking time to share thoughts and feelings, we suggest downloading the companion activities appropriate to this topic and inviting your 5–7 year old to choose one as an added activity. These resources can be found towards the end of the booklet. While the activities are designed so they can be done without adult support, we encourage conversation and collaboration.



Listen to a mindfulness meditation.  
A good one for this topic is:  
Rock the Boat

There are boat-building instructions in the Origami Mindfulness Activity.

App Location:

- All Programs
- Kids & Youth
- 07 – 09 Year Olds
- Mindfulness 101 – The Land of Mindfulness
- Activity – Rock the Boat

Web App Link:

<https://app.smilingmind.com.au/sessions/2/4/4/>



Continue the conversation using  
one of the activity sheets at the  
back of this booklet:

### Origami Mindfulness

This activity is designed to be completed together and will assist children to persevere and see a challenge through to completion. Origami requires slow and careful attention. This is useful in building mindfulness.

### Growth Mindset Heart

This activity is designed to be completed together and will assist children to persevere and see a challenge through to completion. It is also useful in helping children to identify those people in their lives who help them to grow.



Deepen the conversation  
by exploring these questions  
together. Remember, there are  
no wrong answers:

When things get tricky, what do you say to yourself to keep trying?

How can we be our own best friend when we are struggling with something difficult?

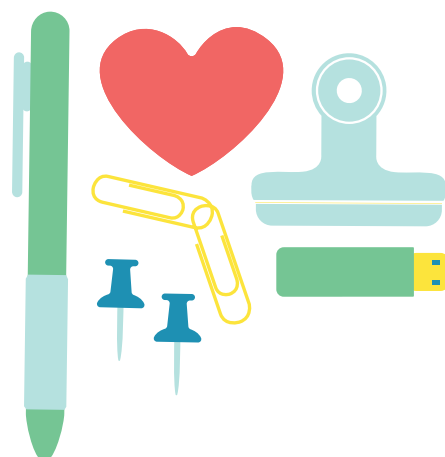
Who encourages you at home and school when you are working on a task that is difficult?

# Stepping forward to school.

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What are you excited about as you step forward to school? Think about some of the things you missed while at home. Draw yourself back at school. Think of some emotions you are feeling in this moment and make sure you add them in too.



## Welcome back.

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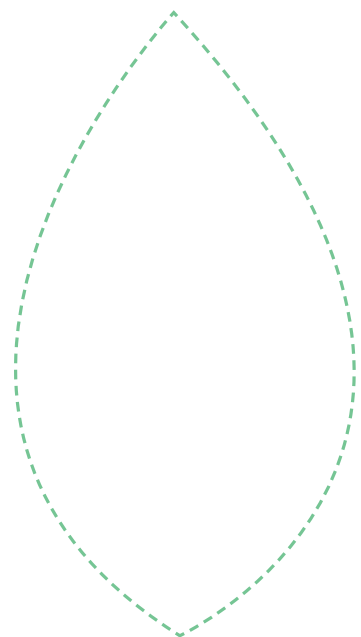
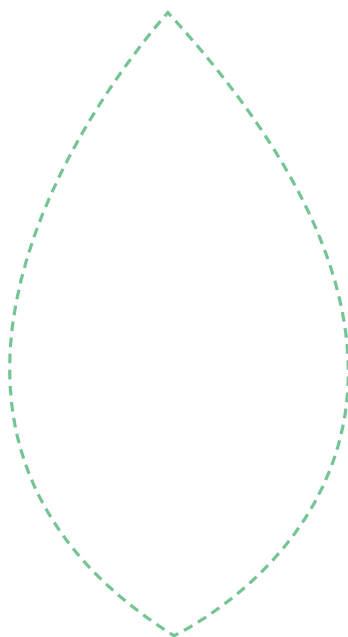
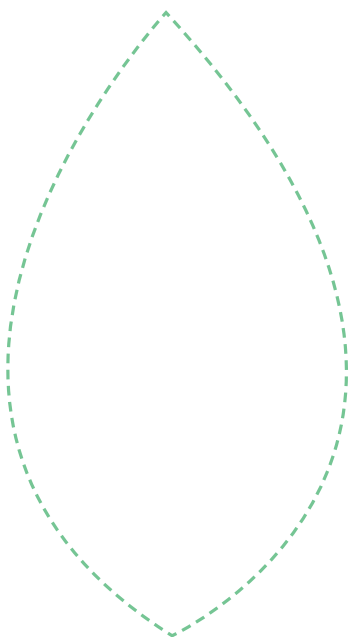
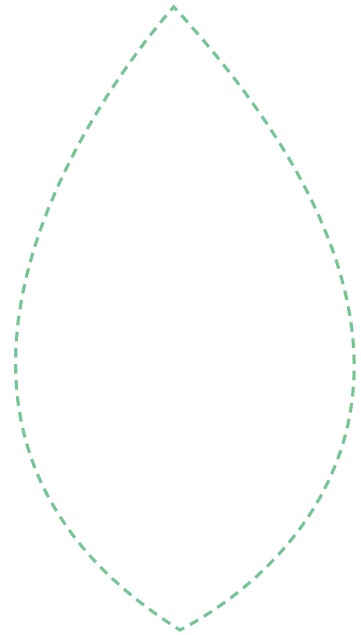
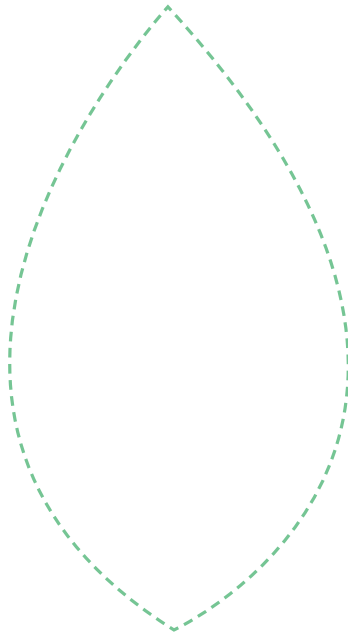
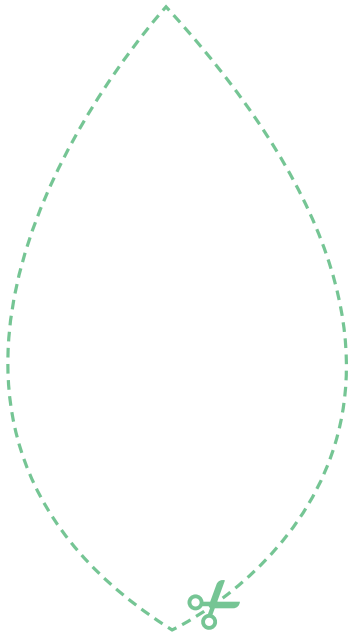
Returning to school brings lots of opportunities to reconnect with things you have missed. Fill the welcome mat with all of the people, places and things you have missed and cannot wait to get back to. Write some emotions you may be feeling in this moment.

WELCOME BACK!

# Gratitude tree.



Think of all the wonderful people, places and things that make you feel happy inside. Use these leaves to write and draw some of them. Then go outside and find a dead branch to bring inside (with your parent's permission) to tie them onto. You can add more each week.



# Savouring Chain.



When we think of beautiful times, we call this savouring. We can do it anytime, about anytime, even if the special thing has not happened yet. Using these coloured strips, write and draw some happy moments and then make a chain. You will need a glue stick to make your loops. You can add to your chain each week.

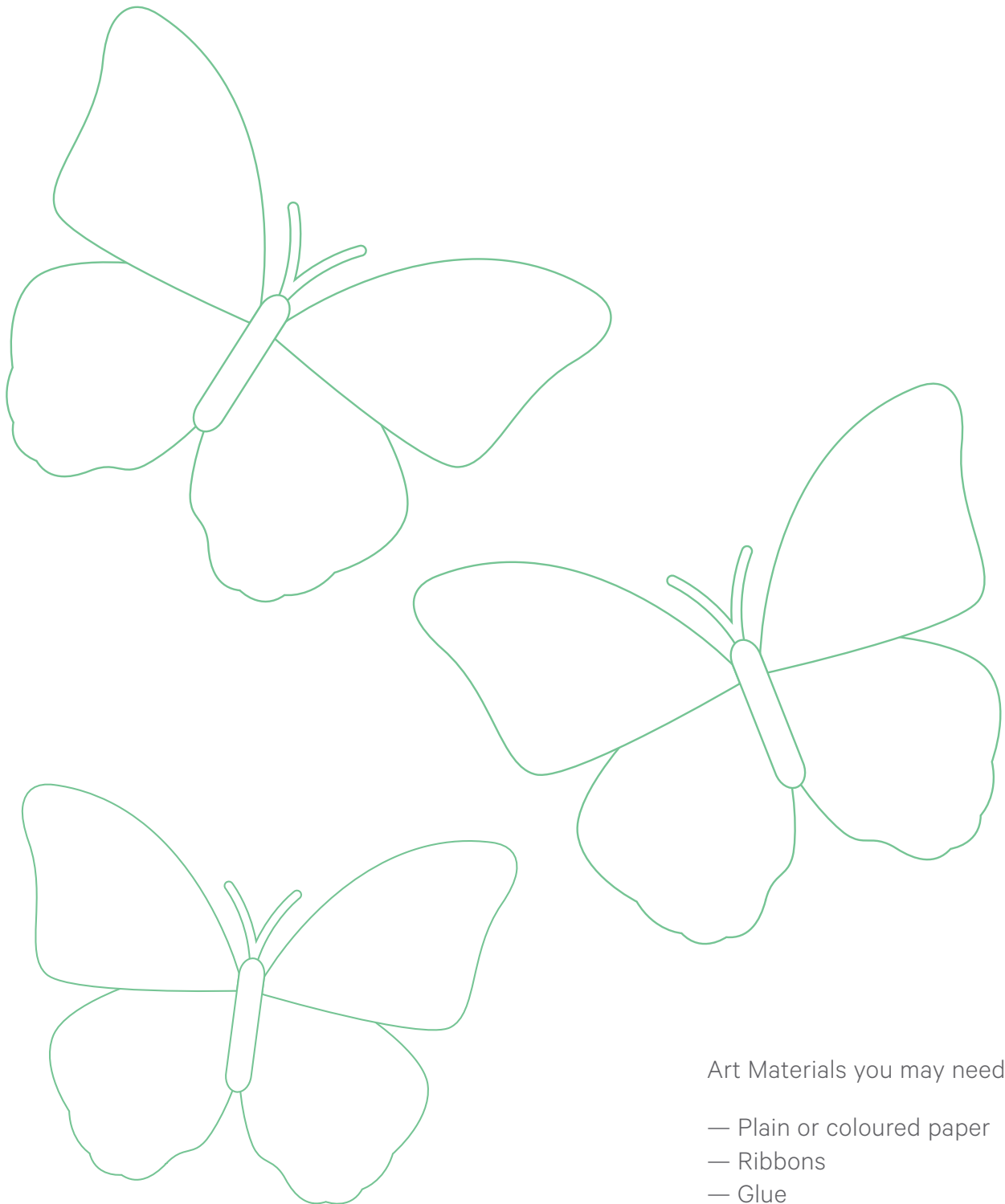
This image shows a blank sheet of white paper designed for a craft project. It features five horizontal dashed lines spaced evenly down the page, each representing a cut line. The lines are color-coded: the topmost line is red, followed by yellow, then blue, purple, and finally green at the bottom. In the top-left corner, there is a small red icon of a pair of scissors, indicating where to start cutting. The entire sheet is otherwise empty, providing space for drawing or writing before assembly.

# Catching butterfly moments.

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When we see a butterfly, it is often a joyful experience. Butterflies dance and weave in the sunlight, making the most of every moment. Create your own butterflies with art materials and hang them up in your room to remind you to look for beautiful moments each and every day.



Art Materials you may need:

- Plain or coloured paper
- Ribbons
- Glue
- Cardboard
- Pencils & colouring materials

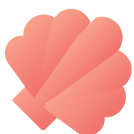


## Unhook and swim on.

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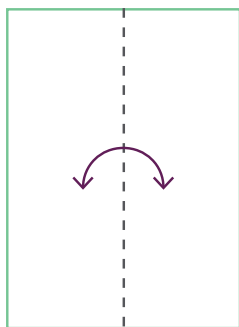
Imagine you are a colourful fish in the deep blue ocean. A hook means danger and it's important to keep swimming if you see one nearby. Draw yourself swimming towards all that makes you happy and far away from the hook.



# Origami mindfulness.

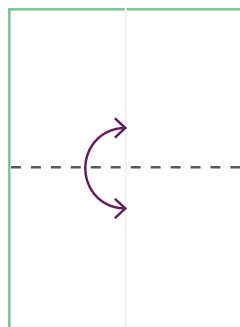


Have you ever tried making origami? You will need an A4 piece of paper to make this little boat shaped origami with an adult and then do the Rock The Boat meditation together. Then make more little boats together and decorate them with many colours.



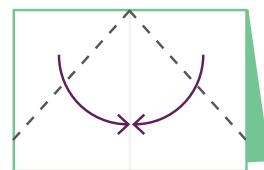
**1.**

Fold in half



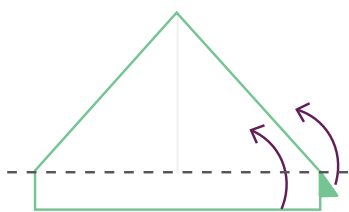
**2.**

Fold in half again



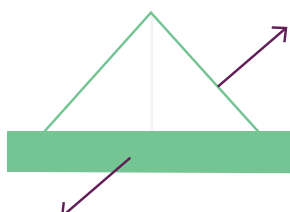
**3.**

Fold in corners



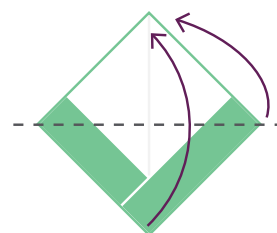
**4.**

Fold up edges on both sides



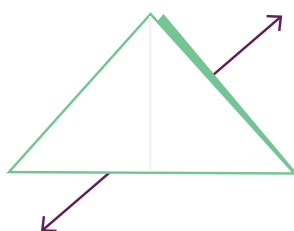
**5.**

Pull the sides out and flatten



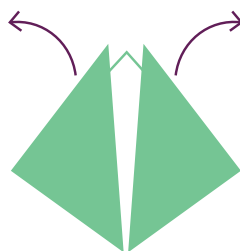
**6.**

Fold front and back layers up



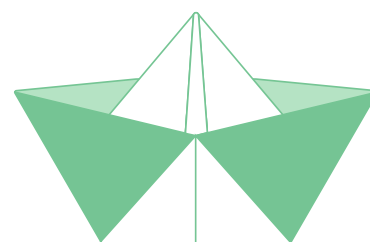
**4.**

Pull sides apart and flatten



**5.**

Pull top flaps outwards



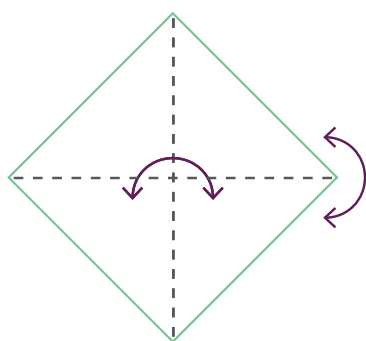
**6.**

Squish the bottom and pull the sides up. Tada!

# Growth mindset heart.

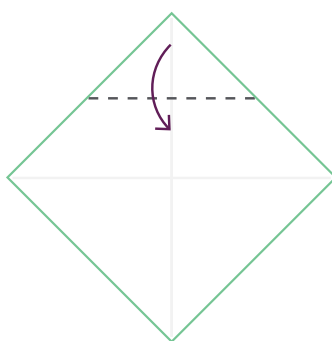


Think of someone who is always there for you and helps you to learn and grow by helping you to keep trying even when things are tricky. Using a square piece of paper, make an origami heart for this person.



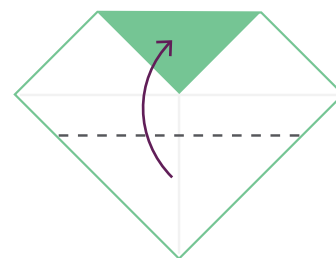
**1.**

Fold in half in both directions



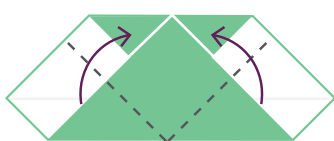
**2.**

Fold the top corner down



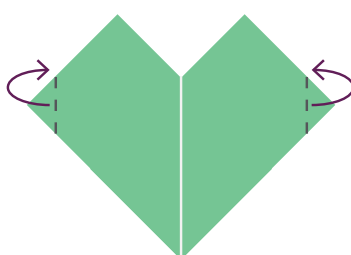
**3.**

Fold the bottom corner up



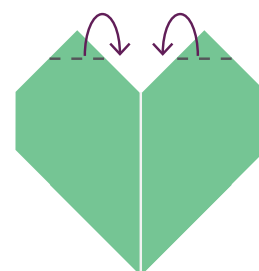
**4.**

Fold each edge inwards



**5.**

Fold the corners on the side



**6.**

Fold the corners on the top





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## Smiling Mind

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[\*\*smilingmind.com.au\*\*](https://smilingmind.com.au)

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Smiling Mind is a not-for-profit organisation that works to make mindfulness meditation accessible to all.

Visit us online or download the free app to get started.

 Available on the iPhone  
App Store

