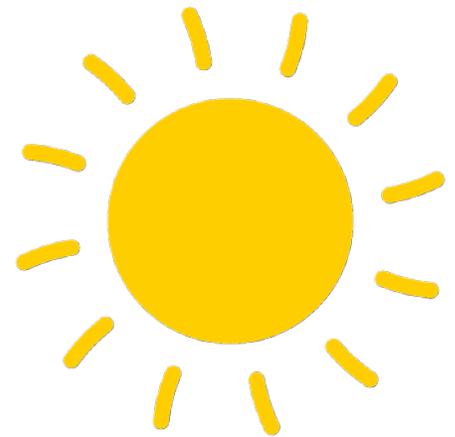




The Mindful Student: STEAM Activities to Promote Emotional Wellness

The lessons in PCS Edventures' programs captivate learners and support their emotional wellness. With our hands-on activities, learners disconnect from daily stressors and engage in the present. This download includes an interactive lesson guiding learners (Grades 4-6) through a mindful activity. Using everyday materials, they create their own suncatcher to "catch" stress and transform it into bright, positive thoughts.



HANDS-ON STEM EDUCATION

For over 30 years, PCS Edventures has inspired students to develop a passion for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), focusing our efforts on making learning and discovery a fun and interactive process for grades K-12.

- Classroom
- After-School
- Home Learning

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Emotional wellness is the ability to effectively manage feelings, stress and changes in a healthy and positive way. Learners with a healthy emotional balance excel socially and academically. They have a mindset that enables them to make healthy choices, build strong relationships and achieve their goals.

Educators, how can we nurture the emotional wellness of our learners? PCS Edventures is here to help! Our comprehensive programs include lessons that help learners disconnect from daily stressors and focus on the present moment. Through our hands-on STEAM activities, learners naturally develop and strengthen the skills they need to maintain a healthy emotional balance.

Inspired by the calming activities that permeate our STEAM programs, this free download leads learners through the steps of crafting a suncatcher with serenity and ease. They will produce a unique creation that grounds them in mindfulness.

Materials Needed:

- Epsom salt
- measuring cup
- water
- microwavable dish
- microwave*
- clear, plastic lids
- string
- pin
- food coloring (optional)
- markers (optional)



* If you do not have access to a microwave, you may use hot tap water.



Directions:

Suggestion: Make a suncatcher ahead of time to show as an example.

- Encourage a class discussion around emotional wellness. Identify different emotions and why learners feel them. Possible discussion questions include:
 - How are you feeling at this moment?
 - Have you ever felt stressed, anxious or overwhelmed?
 - What strategies do you have to calm down or de-stress?
- Place students in pairs or small groups to prepare the materials needed to create individual suncatchers.
- Follow instructions below.



Step-By-Step Instructions:



Step 1:
Measure 1 cup of Epsom salt.



Step 2:
Add 1 cup of water to the microwavable dish.



Step 3:
Microwave the water until warm (about 45 seconds).



(Optional) Step 4:
Add food coloring to the water.



Step 5:
Add the salt to the bowl of warm water and stir until the salt crystals have dissolved.



Step 6:
Pour the mixture onto the plastic lid (just enough to cover the bottom).

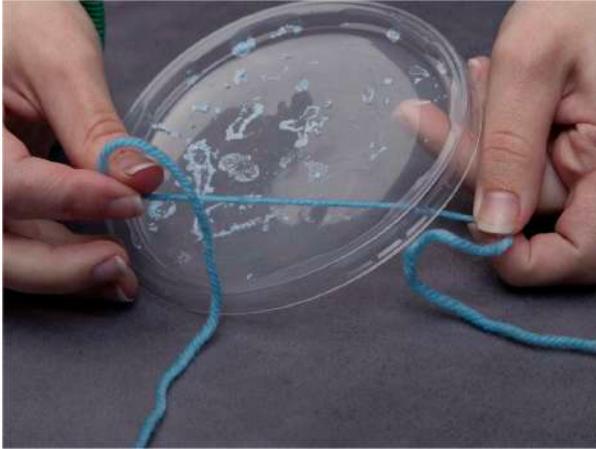


Step 7:
Place the lid in a sunny location.

Step 8:
Let it sit overnight.



Step 9:
When completely dry, have an adult use the pin to make a small hole near the edge of the plastic lid.

**Step 10:**

Tie the string through the hole.

(Optional) Step 11:

Decorate the suncatchers with markers.

**Step 12:**

Hang up your suncatcher!

Directions (continued):

- Discuss with learners how focusing on the present can calm our minds and ease any stress. Share any mindful thoughts and positive emotions learners had throughout the lesson.
- Explain: When feeling stressed, anxious or overwhelmed, we can look at the suncatcher and focus on the present. The suncatcher will catch our stress and transform it into positive, mindful thoughts.

Discussion Questions:

- How are you feeling at this moment? (ask at various points throughout the activity)
- What is something you did well with today?
- What is your favorite way to relax?
- How can we connect with our classmates?
- What strategies do you have that help you de-stress?
- How can we focus on the present?

Extensions:

Get Mindful with BrickLAB Core (Grade 2)!

Instead of flinging bricks, fling troublesome thoughts, anxieties and worries!

- Construct a Brick Flinger using the instructions provided in lesson 1.
- On a piece of paper, have learners write down any thoughts and feelings.
- Crumple the paper up and put it in the Brick Flinger.
- Use the Brick Flinger to push the thoughts away.

Grades 2-3

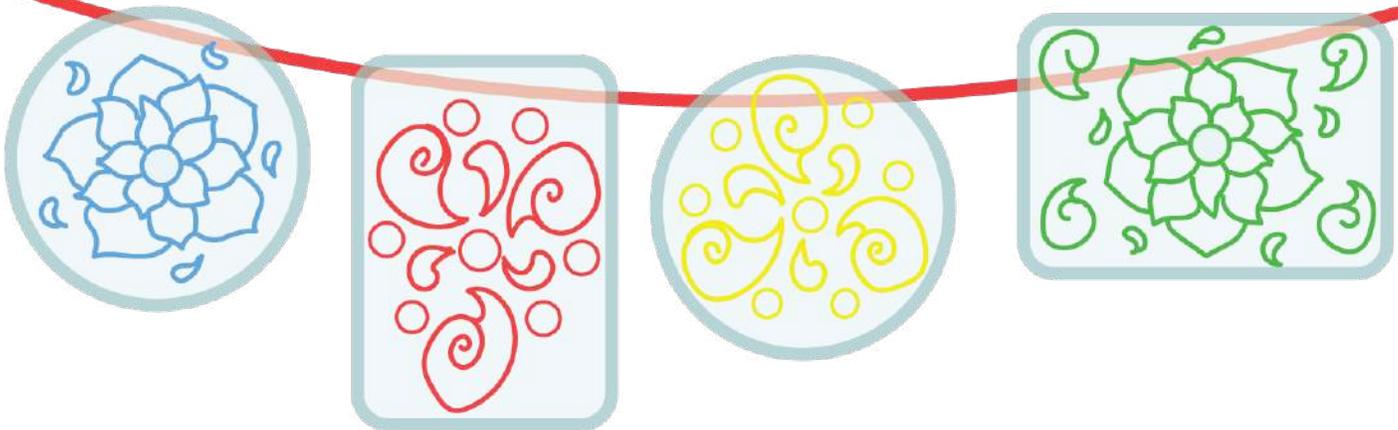
- The educator may choose to prepare the materials and create the suncatchers with individuals or a small group.
- Use a feelings check-in to help learners express how they feel before, during and after the lesson.



Extensions:

Grades 7-8

- Learners use 3-4 plastic lids to create multiple suncatchers. They link the suncatchers together with string.
 - On each suncatcher, learners write down a positive feeling.
 - Example: proud, excited, safe, inspired, hopeful, happy, grateful, calm, content, peaceful, relaxed



References:

National Today. (2023, August 11). Emotional wellness month. <https://nationaltoday.com/emotional-wellness-month/#:~:text=Emotional%20Wellness%20Month%2C%20observed%20all,time%20out%20for%20our%20brain>

Epsom Salt Council. (2021, November 16). Suncatcher craft for kids. <https://www.epsomsaltcouncil.org/crafts/diy-suncatcher-for-kids/>

Featured Product

This STEAM activity was inspired by the activities found in:



Learners tackle creative-thinking and social-emotional learning challenges as they collaborate to construct friendship bracelets, design leaf prints and blueprint new ways to make s'mores, discovering and reflecting on their strengths with this STEAM-filled arts and crafts camp.



This multi-subject program utilizes the PCS Edventures' signature BrickLAB Brick, a STEM manipulative specifically designed to provide students of all ages with a platform for creative and innovative thinking. Learners move through thrilling activities and engage in teamwork, critical thinking and creativity.



For more information, visit: <https://edventures.com/collections>
or contact a STEM Program Specialist at (800) 429-3110

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