



Transformative Teaching Toolkit

Building the Foundation of Wellness & SEL For Your School Year



Breathe For Beginnings



Toolkit Overview

Breathe For Beginnings

Your Transformative Teaching Toolkit will equip you to create a safe, engaging, and supportive learning environment for your students and school community from the start of the school year. This foundational wellness and social-emotional learning toolkit will help you set the stage for a more mindful, thriving classroom all year long. Our curriculum will give you the tools you need to create a vision for your school year, build community in your classroom, and enhance educator and students well-being.

This toolkit includes a Breathe For Beginnings theme overview you can share with your students, colleagues, and families, and several wellness, SEL, and community building strategies you can teach to your students and staff. All practices are CASEL-aligned and differentiated for primary, secondary, and adult education. Each strategy includes a step-by-step description, reflection questions, and scaffolded pedagogical pointers that you can draw on to bring the practice to life.

We are so excited for you to share these powerful practices into your classroom and school community to help build the foundation for everyone to thrive in school.

BREATHE FOR BEGINNINGS

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR WHOLENESS



This is a wonderful day, I have never seen this one before.

— **Maya Angelou**

Be the change you wish to see in the world.

— **Mahatma Gandhi**

*The visionary starts with a clean sheet of paper,
and re-imagines the world.*

— **Malcolm Gladwell**



Take the first step in faith.

You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.

— **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

*This opportunity to go inward has made me grow more than I could
have ever imagined. It has benefited me as a person and in the
classroom, because I'm not making mistakes and then unconsciously
repeating them. Instead, I am reflecting and growing from them.*

— **Christa Peterson, B4C Alum**

BREATHE FOR BEGINNINGS

In Breathe For Beginnings, we embrace each moment with a beginners mind and set our intention with clarity and purpose.

Breathe For Beginnings is about setting ourselves up to reach our full potential as leaders and learners, so we can become more of who we truly want to be throughout the school year. To build our foundation, we create space to clarify our vision for the year, set intentions that align with this vision, and establish community agreements that support us in creating a brave and supportive container for learning to unfold and relationships to flourish.

To start, it is important for us as educators and students to clarify and document our vision for ourselves, our relationships, and our community – beginning with our own physical, mental, and social-emotional well-being! For as Dr. Ilana Nankin's 4-year-old pre-k student, Patrick, once said, "In a community, first you have to love yourself, because if you don't love yourself, you can't love anybody else." When we begin our journey from a foundation of our own well-being, we become better equipped to navigate the ups and downs that are sure to come, and more confident in our ability to use our mind-body wellness practices as tools to stay in our stretch zone when challenges arise.

Once we've clarified our vision, it's essential to set daily intentions that align with it. These intentions are like little steps along the path toward our vision; they ensure that we don't get caught up in our busy schedule and forget what matters most! Taking these steps each day keeps us connected to our passion and purpose, and making space to reflect and take an honest look at how we're doing allows us to shift and change if we find ourselves off track.

In addition to setting our own vision and intentions, Breathe For Beginnings also invites us to foster authentic human connection and establish close relationships. Playful practices, like name games that involve movement and laughter and creative expression icebreakers, are a great place to begin fostering community. Creating opportunities for us to individually share who we are, how we feel, and what we need to thrive in school – and collectively establish community agreements – helps us foster a brave space and build a foundation of belonging and trust.

Finally, Breathe For Beginnings is not just about vision, intentions, and connection – it's also about tapping into our inner strength and putting our intentions into action. When we translate our intentions into action, the growth process begins to unfold; as we take steps to manifest our intentions into reality, we often face internal obstacles that stem from unhealthy habits, limiting beliefs, or stuck emotions, as well as external challenges that are often outside of our control. Although it is not always easy, when we work through resistances, we strengthen our capacity, build resilience, and gain new insights about ourselves, our relationships, and our communities. These insights help deepen our awareness, inform our decisions, and expand what we believe to be possible – forming a virtuous cycle that in turn enhances our vision.

Breathe For Change's intention as we embark on this school year together is to help co-create the container within which all members of the school community can learn and grow together. We are excited and honored to provide tools and support for you as you undergo this journey of new Beginnings. Let the journey begin!



CREATING YOUR VISION

B4C Theme

SEL*f Component

SEL Competency

SEL Purpose

Materials

Breathe For Beginnings

Community Connection or Creative Expression

Self-Awareness, Responsible Decision Making

Cultivates passion, inspires action, clarifies long term goals

Optional: journal and pen or device for writing



DESCRIPTION

1. It's the beginning of the school year, so let's create space to connect to and clarify our vision for ourselves.
2. To begin, I invite you to find a comfortable seated position, and bring your hands to your heart.
3. Feel your heart beating beneath your palms, and your breath moving in and out, up and down.
4. As you continue to breathe, I invite you to consider: What is your vision for yourself and your well-being this school year? What would it look like, sound like, and feel like for you to reach your full potential this year?
5. Now take a moment to visualize yourself living into this vision. See yourself at the end of the school year, and imagine as though you've fulfilled this vision and gotten everything you wanted out of this year, and more. What are you experiencing? Who are you surrounded by? How are you feeling? What does well-being look like for you physically? mentally? social-emotionally?
6. Take a moment to acknowledge yourself and your vision by taking a deep breath in, and a deep breath out.
7. Now, I invite you to take a few minutes to capture this vision in writing (or in another way that feels supportive to you).
8. Now that you've reflected in writing, let's take some time to share our visions with each other, and explore how we can best support each other as Accountabili-buddies so that we can all bring our visions to life!



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What is your vision for yourself this school year?

What is your vision for your own physical, mental, and social-emotional well-being?

What support do you need to bring your vision to life?

What actions can you take now to begin manifesting your vision?

How can your Accountabili-buddies best support you in staying true to your vision?

➤ — Lead with Love — ➤

PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

Facilitate a conversation with your students about what it means to develop a vision for ourselves — and why it's important. Model what it looks like to dream into your vision for the school year, and invite a few students to share their visions to provide more examples. You can also scaffold this activity by inviting them to consider what their “hopes and dreams” are for themselves this school year, and create a “hopes and dreams wall” with drawings of their visions.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Share how and why the process of visioning at the beginning of the school year can be so instrumental in building our foundation for long term success. Explain that going through a visioning process can help us clarify who we want to become — and what we want to accomplish — during our journey together. Ensure that students document their visions, and return back to them often to reconnect to what matters most.

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

Guide a staff or community-wide visioning process at the beginning of the school year to support staff and families in creating individual and shared visions for themselves and the community. Invite them to share their visions with other members of the community to foster connection.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Acknowledge that all visions are welcome, and encourage each person to create a vision that resonates with who they are and what they want for themselves. Use permissions-based language to ensure that all participants feel agency and ownership over their visioning process.





COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS



B4C Theme

Breathe For Beginnings

SEL*F Component

Community Connection

SEL Competency

Self-Awareness, Self Management, Relationship Skills,
Social Awareness, Responsible Decision Making


SEL Purpose

Establishes an inclusive, brave container for learning

Materials

Paper or journal and pen for personal reflection; white board
or poster board and marker for community reflection

DESCRIPTION

1. To establish an inclusive and brave space for all of us to learn and grow, we are going to take some time to co-create Community Agreements together. Community Agreements aim to support us in building a safe and supportive environment for us as both individuals and as a community.
2. To begin, I invite you to take a moment to write down 2-3 values or agreements you would like our class to uphold throughout our year together in order to support everyone in thriving (e.g., be kind, teamwork, impact over intent)
3. I invite you now to share the values and agreements that resonate with you with a partner (or small group). Notice the similarities between your shares!
4. Now, let's generate a list of what we collectively value as members of
 
 our learning community. Who would like to share? (Generate list; ensure equity of voice)
5. Now that we've generated a big list of ideas, let's identify the overlapping values to help us narrow down our list! (Narrow down list to however many agreements feel right for your community)
6. Is there anything missing, or anything that you believe needs to change before we arrive at consensus? (make any relevant adjustments)
7. Amazing! Let's review and celebrate our amazing Community Agreements! We will continue to come back to and update these agreements throughout the year to ensure that our community is a place where everyone here can thrive!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



What do you value as a member of this community?

What will support you in thriving in this community?

What agreements do you believe we should uphold?

Which of these agreements put you in your stretch zone?

How can we hold each other accountable to upholding these agreements?

» — Lead with Love — «

PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS



PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

Begin the process by asking students how we want to treat ourselves and our friends in our community. Then, explain that Community Agreements help us be great friends and learners. Give very specific examples of what agreements could be to spark creativity — and ask students to share their ideas as a whole group.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Have a discussion about why Community Agreements are important — let the students drive it. Get buy in by ensuring every student has a voice in the process, whether through writing, speaking, sharing in partners, etc. Keep the agreements on the wall or somewhere visible, and refer back to them ongoingly to ensure embodiment.

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

At the beginning of a collective experience, take time to establish Community Agreements. If it's a big group, perhaps share the Community Agreements, and create space for everyone to either agree to them as is or suggest updates. If it's a smaller group, consider co-creating the Agreements together.

SCAFFOLDING

There are many ways to approach establishing Community Agreements — your approach will depend on the context! You can co-create Community Agreements as a community, offer foundational Community Agreements and invite students to add to or update them, or you can share what the Community Agreements are based on previous experience of what works.





INTENTION SETTING



B4C Theme

SEL*f Component

SEL Competency

SEL Purpose

Breathe For Beginnings

Settle In or Focus

Self-Awareness, Responsible Decision Making

Generates alignment, brings clarity, inspires action

DESCRIPTION

1. Find a comfortable seated or standing position.
2. Bring one hand over your heart, and the other over that hand.
3. Soften your gaze or close your eyes, and connect to your breath, observing the rise and fall of each inhale and each exhale.
4. As you continue to breathe, I invite you to set an intention for yourself. How do you want to show up today? What energy will support you in fulfilling your vision for yourself? How do you intend to be? (e.g., my intention is to be present, compassionate, playful, etc.)
5. Now that you've connected to your intention, find one or two words that represent your intention, and can serve as your anchor throughout your day and help you stay focused on what matters most to you!
6. Breathe this intention into your heart, exhale release. If your eyes are closed, you can gently open them.
7. Now, I invite you to share your intention (via a journal, partner share, small group share, with the whole community, etc.).
8. Allow this intention to serve as your anchor throughout our time together. If your mind wanders, or if you find yourself feeling out of alignment with your vision, reconnect to your intention in order to return back to center.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What is your intention for yourself and your well-being?

How are you committed to showing up here?

What energy do you want to embody right now?

How will this intention support you in fulfilling your vision?

When might you reconnect to your intention?



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PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

For younger students, have a conversation about what it means to set an intention. Model what it looks like to set an intention using the sentence frame: “My intention is to be...” (present, loving, playful, etc.) You can also scaffold the practice by inviting students to consider what their “hopes and dreams” are for themselves today.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Share the science behind intention setting to enhance engagement. Explain that setting intentions can increase focus, improve performance, reduce stress, and enhance well-being. Incorporate intention setting as a consistent part of your routine; either guide students through an intention setting meditation or encourage them to write or share their intentions.

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

You can guide an intention setting practice at the beginning of a meeting, workshop, or other engagement. Encourage participants to consider how they can embody their intention during your time together — and invite them to integrate this practice into their daily lives and teaching.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Use invitational language to ensure everyone can participate in the intention setting practice in a way that feels comfortable to them (e.g., “I invite you to find a comfortable seat...” or “set whatever intention feels best for you at this moment”).





THE 3 ZONES

B4C Theme

SEL*f Component

SEL Competency

SEL Purpose

Materials

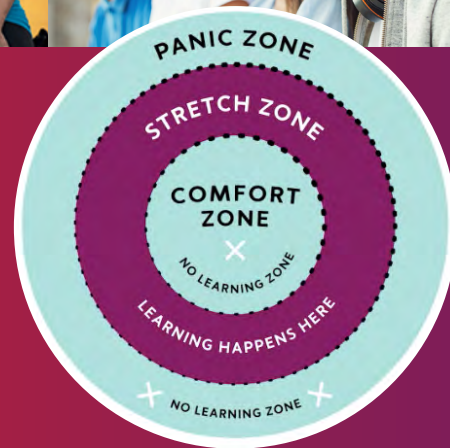
Breathe For Beginnings

Community Connection or Focus

Self-Awareness, Self Management,
Responsible Decision Making

Deepens learning, fosters growth

The 3 Zones Framework Visual



DESCRIPTION

1. I am so excited to introduce you to an amazing framework called the 3 Zones, which we will use to support us in creating a container that is safe, yet simultaneously stretches us to grow. Let's explore what these 3 Zones are all about!
2. **Comfort Zone** (Inner Circle). The comfort zone is where we are in our bubble, feel very comfortable, and likely are surrounded by others who share similar perspectives and viewpoints. No boundaries are being pushed in the comfort zone. There is nothing wrong with being in the comfort zone, but what is important to note is that: NO LEARNING takes place in the comfort zone.
3. **Stretch Zone** (Middle Circle). Beyond the comfort zone is the stretch zone. In this zone, you are still safe, yet you may feel uncomfortable, confronted, or challenged; new perspectives are being shared, which may challenge your beliefs and worldviews. The point we want you to take away here is that the Stretch Zone is where LEARNING happens. And this is where we will invite you to step into throughout our time together.
4. **Panic Zone** (Outer Circle). Beyond the stretch zone is the panic zone. We've all been here. This is where we are in panic; and it no longer feels safe. It can be expressed in many ways (e.g., shut down, defensive, disengaged, fight, flight, freeze, fawn, etc.) And just like the comfort zone, NO LEARNING takes place in the panic zone.
5. Throughout our time together, we encourage you to collectively embrace the stretch zone. We want to push ourselves beyond comfort; but not to the point of panic for the sake of both our individual and collective well-being.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What does the comfort zone look and feel like for you?

What does the stretch zone look and feel like for you?

What does the panic zone look and feel like for you?

What practices can you draw on for support if you're in the panic zone?

How can you step more fully into your stretch zone?

How can we support you in staying in your stretch zone?



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PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS



PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

Show a visual representation of the 3 Zones and ask students open ended questions to support them in understanding what it means to be in each zone. Provide specific, relevant examples for each zone that connect to their lives and classroom experience. Acknowledge students when you notice they are "in their stretch zone!" to promote growth.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Explain each zone at the beginning of your time together and then ask students to think of times that they've been in each zone within or outside of school. Make the framework personal by asking them to consider what being in the stretch zone would look like, sound like, and feel like for them within this context.



ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

Introduce the 3 zones before engaging in courageous conversations as a group. Encourage participants to embrace their stretch zone during your time together through vulnerable sharing, mindful listening, and active engagement. Invite them to share this framework with the communities they teach and lead.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

When introducing the 3 Zones, proactively encourage students to consider which mind-body wellness and SEL*f practices they can draw on if they find themselves in the panic zone to support them in returning back to the comfort or stretch zone.



NAME GAME



B4C Theme

Breathe For Beginnings

SEL*f Component

Community Connection or Creative Expression

SEL Competency

Social Awareness, Relationship Skills

SEL Purpose

Build community, foster human connection

DESCRIPTION

1. It's time for all of us to get to know each other! I invite you to take a moment to look around the room and share a smile with your new friends and old.
2. The intention of this game is to help us remember each other's names and build community. Your only job is to have fun, and be fully self-expressed and engaged.
3. Take a moment to think about an adjective that starts with the letter or sound of your first name. Give me a thumbs up when you have your adjective! (thumbs up!)
4. Now, let's bring in some movement! I invite you to think of a fun movement that represents your name and adjective! Everyone have your move? (Yes!)
5. Now that we have our adjectives and movements, here is the plan: Each of us will have the opportunity to introduce our name and adjective to the group, while simultaneously making our move.
6. (Model) For example, I am "Inspiring Ilana" (twirl and jump around).
7. After each person says their name and adjective in motion, the rest of us will repeat back the name and adjective while making the same movement - with high energy!
8. (Model) Let's try it! I am "Inspiring Ilana" (twirl and jump around). Now, you repeat back, "Inspiring Ilana," and do the twirl with me! (community repeats back).
9. Great, now who would like to go next? You will take the next turn, and we'll continue to pass the spotlight to the right until everyone has had the opportunity to share who they are!
10. Research shows that repeating someone's name 3 times the first time you meet them greatly increases our ability to remember their name, so I encourage you to continue to use and practice each other's names, adjectives, and movements to help us all remember everyone in this new community!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What adjective that starts with the same letter or sound as your name describes you?

Why do you connect to this adjective?

How can you embody this adjective through movement?

How did it feel to express yourself to your community?

What did you learn about yourself through this experience?

What did you learn about others through this experience?

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PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

To make this developmentally appropriate for young children, You can let your students choose any adjective that represents who they are instead of a specific word that starts with the same letter or sound as their name. You can also generate a list of adjectives they can choose from as a community to give them choice and options — and increase their vocabulary!

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Model with all-out energy and playfulness! When you embody what you are asking your students to do, they will be much more likely to actively participate! Explain the why behind this game by sharing the research; this will increase engagement and buy in. You can have students write their names and adjectives on name tags to support integration.

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

This is a great icebreaker for adults! Invite adults to put on their “inner child hats,” and encourage them to tap into their creativity and have fun! Be the first to model, and go all out in order to inspire high energy. Using name tags to reinforce the adjectives and names can be helpful for new groups of people.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

After you’ve modeled, invite whoever feels called to go first so that you can begin with someone who is choosing to share. Encourage students to participate in whatever way feels best to them, and always offer the option for people to pass to create an inclusive container.





3 COLLECTIVE BREATHS



B4C Theme

Breathe For Beginnings

SEL*F Component

Settle In or Breath Awareness

SEL Competency

Self-Awareness, Self Management

SEL Purpose

Reduces stress, enhances awareness, focuses the mind

DESCRIPTION

1. Settle into a comfortable position (seated or standing).
2. Bring both hands to your heart (or bring one hand to your heart and the other to your belly, or rest your hands comfortably on your thighs or on your lap, etc.).
3. Focus your eyes on one point in front of you or gently close them, whichever feels more comfortable to you.
4. As you settle in, begin to draw your attention to your breath. Notice how each inhale, and each exhale moves through your body.
5. Let's take 3 collective breaths together.
6. Take a deep breath in; deep breath out. Inhale; exhale. Breathe in, out with an audible sigh.
7. Now take a moment to check in, and notice how you feel after taking your 3 collective breaths.
8. If your eyes are closed, you can gently open them. I'd love for you to share how you feel with the community (or a partner) after your 3 Collective Breaths.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How do you feel after taking 3 collective breaths?

How did this practice shift the way you feel, if at all?

What was it like to breathe with your friends?

When might it be helpful to take 3 collective breaths in school?

When might it be helpful to take 3 collective breaths out of school?



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PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

Model this practice first, and then invite students to practice the 3 collective breaths with you. Ask students when might be a good time to take our breaths. Build on the conversation by explaining that this practice can help calm us down when we feel sad, angry, frustrated, or scared.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

This is a great practice to use to settle students into class, as a brain break or transition, or in response to a stressful moment. After they become familiar with your routine, you can give different students the opportunity to facilitate the practice to build confidence and leadership skills.

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

Facilitate this practice at the beginning of meetings, group discussions, or during stressful moments. After facilitating 3 collective breaths, encourage your community members to notice how they feel and consider when they can incorporate this practice into their life and teaching.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Students who have experienced trauma may not feel comfortable closing their eyes; always provide an eye-opened option. For example, you can offer the option to “focus your eyes at one point in front of you or close them.”

VARIATIONS



You can invite students to intentionally breathe in whatever they need in the moment (e.g., love, support, relaxation), and exhale or sigh out whatever may not be serving them (e.g., stress, fear, anger). You can also encourage them to contribute something to the community through their exhale, or connect the practice to a theme (e.g., Breathe For Gratitude).

DAILY PRACTICE

Practice this strategy consistently with students to promote breath awareness and enhance focus and well-being. Encourage them to use this practice when they need to center themselves or clear their minds both in and outside of school.



2 WORD CHECK IN

B4C Theme

Breathe For Beginnings

SEL*f Component

Settle In or Closing

SEL Competency

Self-Awareness, Social Awareness

SEL Purpose

Enhances emotional awareness, promotes authenticity, builds community



DESCRIPTION

1. I invite you to find a comfortable position so that we can settle in together. Ground down through your sit bones, lengthen through your spine, and relax your shoulders down your back.
2. Place both hands on your heart, and find a point in front of you to focus your gaze or close your eyes, whatever is most comfortable for you.
3. Connect to your breath. Take a deep breath in, and a deep breath out.
4. As you continue to breathe, begin to notice how you are feeling right now. What emotions are you experiencing inside you? Every emotion is welcome; give yourself permission to be exactly as you are. Take a few more moments here to connect to how you are feeling.
5. Now, choose two words to describe how you are feeling.
6. When you have your two words, gently open your eyes if they're closed.
7. To close this experience, we will now take turns sharing our two words so we can honor how everyone is feeling.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What two words describe how you are feeling?

How did it feel to connect to your feelings?

What was it like to share your 2 words with our community?

What was it like to hear everyone else share their two words?

When might be a helpful time to do a 2 word check in each day?



PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

Before leading this practice, brainstorm a list of feelings with students and draw and label these facial expressions on the board or a poster in order to develop students' emotional awareness and vocabulary. During the 2 word check in, offer young children examples of how they might feel (e.g., perhaps you are feeling excited and energized, or happy and confident! Or, maybe you are feeling sad and tired, or angry and afraid).

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Build students' emotional vocabulary by providing complex examples of feeling words as you guide them through the practice (e.g., perhaps you are feeling overjoyed and grateful, or surprised and connected! Or, maybe you are feeling introverted and inspired, or frustrated and motivated). After several rounds of practice, you can invite them to check in and find two words without needing to offer examples.



ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

Lead the 2 word check in at the beginning of meetings, group discussions, during stressful moments, or after powerful experiences to get a pulse of how people are feeling, and to foster vulnerability and human connection. After the practice, encourage your community members to consider when they can incorporate this practice into their life and teaching.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Make sure that students have plenty of time to center themselves and connect to their breath before asking them to choose their two words. It is important to give people space to tap into their authentic emotions before asking them to settle in on two words. Allow students who do not want to share in the circle to pass.

DAILY PRACTICE

This is an effective strategy to incorporate into your daily routine; you can use this to take a pulse of where everyone in the community is at the start or end of class, in transition, or during community circle.



SUN SALUTATIONS



B4C Theme

Breathe For Beginnings

SEL*f Component

Mindful Movement

SEL Competency

Self Awareness, Self Management

SEL Purpose

Energizes the body, releases tension, strengthens the mind

Materials

Yoga Mats (optional)

DESCRIPTION

1. I am so excited to practice Half Sun Salutations with you! Sun Salutations are a series of mindful movements that help increase our energy and deepen our mind-body connection. This foundational mindful movement practice is a great way to build stamina, release tension, and clear our minds.
2. Stand up tall by placing both feet flat onto the ground in whatever way feels most comfortable in your body. Open your heart, relax your shoulders down your back, and lengthen your spine. (Mountain Pose).
3. Bring your hands to heart center, and connect to your breath.
4. Inhale, reach your arms up towards the sky, palms touch (Extended Mountain Pose).
5. Exhale, hinge at the hips, and fold forward. (Forward Fold).
6. Inhale, press your hands against your shins, and lengthen your spine (Halfway Lift).
7. Exhale, fold forward. Let it go. (Forward Fold).
8. Inhale, arms up, reach up, as you come back up to stand (Extended Mountain Pose).
9. Exhale, bring your hands back to heart center. Take a few breaths here, and notice how you feel. (Mountain Pose).
10. Repeat this Half Sun Salutation a few times, one breath per movement. (Guided at first, then at your own pace).
11. After the final round, bring your hands back to heart center. Focus your eyes on one spot or gently close them, and begin to pay attention to the sensations moving through your body. Now, notice how you are feeling. Take a deep breath in; long breath out.
12. Take a moment now to set an intention for yourself (or acknowledge yourself for something you are proud of, visualize how you want to show up today, etc.).
13. Let's close this practice by taking 3 collective breaths together. Inhale, breathing in your intention; exhale, let it go. Breathe in, breathe out. Last time, inhale, and release.

SEATED VARIATION (1/2 SUN SALUTATIONS IN CHAIR)

1. Find a comfortable position in your chair. Place both feet flat onto the floor, hips width distance apart. Open your heart, relax your shoulders down your back, and lengthen your spine.
2. Bring your hands to heart center, and take a few moments to connect to your breath.
3. Inhale, reach your arms up towards the sky, palms touch.
4. Exhale, slowly hinge at the hips, fold forward. Release your hands and let your head hang heavy towards the earth.
5. Inhale, press your hands against your shins, lengthen your spine, half way life.
6. Exhale, fold forward. Let it go.
7. Inhale, arms up, reach up, coming back up to a tall seat.
8. Exhale, bring your hands back to heart. Take a few breaths here, and notice how you feel



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How do you feel after practicing Half Sun Salutations?

What shifts did you notice in your body and mind?

When would be a helpful time for you to draw on this mindful movement practice?

When would be a helpful time for our class to draw on this practice?

PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

MIND-BODY CONNECTION

Bring to life the concept of “one breath per movement” by bringing your arms up as you inhale and down as you exhale. Model first, and have students practice one breath per movement with you. Once they embody the concept, model and teach the Half Sun Salutation.

CLASSROOM INTEGRATION

This is a great practice to facilitate before a test, as a brain break, or in transition to bring students back to center. As you facilitate, invite students to bring in what will serve them through their inhale (e.g., peace, calm, relaxation, success) and let go of any thing that’s in their way through their exhale (e.g., stress, overwhelm, self-doubt).

PHYSICAL VARIATIONS

Adjust this practice as space permits, and create your own versions that work for your classroom or community context (seated at desks, open space, outside, etc.)

TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

Discuss safety expectations with students prior to mindful movement, and make sure that they each have enough space to move through the practice freely.





SUN SALUTATIONS



B4C Theme

SEL*F Component

SEL Competency

SEL Purpose

Materials

Breathe For Beginnings

Mindful Movement

Self Awareness, Self Management

Energizes the body, releases tension, strengthens the mind

Yoga Mats (optional)

DESCRIPTION

1. I invite you to stand up, with your arms by your sides, and your feet planted on the grass (Mountain Pose).
2. Inhale, reach your arms up to the sun (Extended Mountain Pose).
3. Exhale, fold down to the soil (Forward Fold).
4. Inhale, look forward and smell the beautiful flowers: "Mmmmm!" (Halfway Lift).
5. Exhale, plant your hands in the grass and hop your feet back to your centipede! (Plank Pose).
6. Lower down to your belly and find your snake: "HsssSSss!"
7. Inhale, poke your head out of the soil like a wiggly worm! (Cobra Pose).
8. Exhale, wiggle back down to the grass.
9. Tuck your paws, and lift your hips to find your dog! Wag your doggy tail: "Woof Woof!" (Downward Dog Pose).
10. Hop forward to smell the flowers again: "MmMmmmMM!" (Halfway Lift).
11. Exhale, fold back down to the soil. (Forward Fold).
12. Inhale, reach your arms up to grab the sun! (Extended Mountain Pose).
13. Exhale, bring the shining sun to your heart.
14. Repeat cycle, faster, and then faster!
15. (After a few rounds) Bring your hands to your heart: notice how you are feeling right now.
16. We are going to practice the Sun Salutation one more time... but this time in super slow motion! Repeat slowly.
17. (After one slow round) Bring your hands back to your heart: notice how you are feeling right now.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



How did you feel after practicing your Sun Salutation super fast?

How did you feel after practicing your Sun Salutation super slow?

What was it like to practice Sun Salutations fast compared to slow?

When would be a helpful time for you to practice the Sun Salutation super fast? Super slow?

» — Lead with Love — «

PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

MIND-BODY CONNECTION

Model Sun Salutations with enthusiasm to inspire excitement and engagement! Stop after a round of the Speedy Sun Salutations to invite students to check in on how they feel. Then, transition to a “super sloooowwww motion” version to help students feel the shift in their bodies and minds after practicing Sun Salutations in different ways.

REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION

Ask students to reflect on how they feel when going fast compared to slow to deepen their bodily awareness, and critical thinking and communication skills.

INTEGRATION

Encourage students to share when they think doing the Sun Salutation fast would be really helpful (e.g., when we are tired, need energy, etc.) and to the contrary, when practicing it slow motion would be more useful e.g., when we need to calm down, when we have a lot of energy, after recess, etc.).

EARLY CHILDHOOD DIFFERENTIATION

Get creative and have fun! Give students the space to choose which animals they would like to represent each part of the Sun Salutations.

UPPER ELEMENTARY DIFFERENTIATION

Some upper elementary students may not be as excited as the younger children about making animal noises during this practice. Simply replace the animal noise with anatomical cues to meet the developmental needs of your students.

TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

Discuss safety expectations with students prior to mindful movement, and make sure that they each have enough space to move through the practice freely.

