

MINDFUL MUSICIANS

MARCH 2025 — ISSUE 2



Welcome

Discover the harmony of music and social-emotional learning. Explore insightful resources, creative tips, and inspiring tools to nurture growth and connection on every page.

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HELLO, FROM CALLIE

Demand. Depletion. Deepest gratification.

I'm talking to you, caregiver, from the lens of a mom today. Two things can exist: the utmost joy and the utmost exhaustion; the desire to soak up every last sticky kiss, hug, cuddle, and the desire to be alone and untouched for awhile; the thought that you can imagine nothing more rewarding than this parenthood experience and the thought of throwing all of the dishes and laundry away because of the incessant nature of their calling.

For me, the scale of motherhood is like playing on a teeter totter and the moments of true balance are fleeting and somewhat uncommon. Even just in writing this short letter to you, I've been pulled away four times by life insisting I tend to the responsibilities I've happily signed myself up for. Yet, every momma I talk to that is in a similar boat reports to me the feelings of overwhelm that visit them frequently. I feel it too, my friend.

I'm inviting you (as I'm also inviting myself) to allow the entire range of emotions, accepting them as they are, telling guilt to take a backseat (or, better yet, just get out of the car completely), and know that while productivity is absolutely somewhere on our minds at all times, so too are the reminders that these babies are literally growing every second. I don't know about you, but this instills a sense of panic in me that sends me down the spiral of enoughness...and it gets damp, dark, and yuck in there.

It is March... and for those of us that have chosen to live in the middle of this beautiful country where we've spent more time with cold and clouds than warmth and sun for the past four months, it's time for us to peel out of our cocoons and rub our tired eyes in hopes that we are coming into a more light hearted season.

A season where we allow ourselves to truly listen to our children and hold boundaries with love. A season where we schedule play time (because, let's be honest, we have to!) with ourselves, our partners, and each other to maintain connection, vulnerability, and growth alongside one another. A season where we can let the dishes sit for a minute and take another spoonful of ice cream with our feet up on the couch.

A season where we can literally look into the mirror every day and have the opportunity to say "I am enough. I am doing enough. I have been enough. I will always be enough". Because you are the only person that really needs to believe that. Relationships will evolve for better and for worse, but you are absolutely the only one that knows the core of you. And as we move forward in this journey of life and this journey of Mindful Musicians, I would argue that there is nothing more powerful to model to your children than your own self-love, self-care, and self-respect...because you know you are enough.

Callie Fitzgerald



Seek 3 Find



Saxophone



half rest



quarter rest

mp

mezzo piano



whole note



treble clef

d

half note

f

forte



trumpet



triangle

p

piano



quarter note



Seek 3 Find



saxophone



half rest



quarter rest

mp

mezzo piano



whole note



treble clef

d

half note

f

forte



triangle



trumpet

p

piano



quarter note



THE MINDS BEHIND MINDFUL MUSICIANS: JILL KLINEBRIEL

This article is the second in a series that offers a behind-the-scenes look at the talented individuals shaping Mindful Musicians, from composers and lyricists to graphic designers and teachers. Get to know the people who bring our music, lessons, and resources to life!

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.



Jill Klinebriel
Mindful Musicians Instructor at Centrally Rooted

Tell me about your experience learning about Mindful Musicians.

Callie came to me three and a half years ago and said, “I want you to be my first teacher of this Mindful Musicians curriculum.” I had never taught anything, and I certainly had never taught little children. But I have a son who is now fifteen, so I have the experience of being a mom, and a mom that is super hands-on. As a musician, I did all sorts of musical/educational things with my child. I had taken my son to adult and child music classes, and Callie explained that it was similar to those, but with lyrics that are based on brain health and confidence building—intentional lyrics. As soon as she showed me the songs that she was writing, I was hooked. I thought, “You are brilliant.”

What’s your favorite song from the Green Album, and why?

I like “I Like Rain.” I love doing it with the parachute. “Curiosity” is fun with the shakers because there are three different patterns. I love “Square,” because that one is a great one to teach visually!

What is something unexpected that you’ve learned while teaching Mindful Musicians classes?

I like “I Like Rain.” I love doing it with the parachute. “Curiosity” is fun with the shakers because there are three different patterns. I love “Square,” because that one is a great one to teach visually!

Why do you think families need Mindful Musicians?

It offers you a way to be intentional with your time with your child. Even exposing your child [to the music]: that’s food, that’s language that is going into your child’s brain. You have a choice with how you spend time with your child. You can use five, ten, fifteen minutes and do something [that will] help you bond, to help you have a language to communicate with each other. It’s like a gift of having a healthy relationship with your child. You are building up a child that is going to have more trust in you; they believe that you are there for them. I can’t think of any reason why you wouldn’t want to do this with them.

Have you noticed any long-term impacts on students who participate in these classes?

One hundred percent. There are kids that started out as babies and are still taking classes as three- or four-year-olds, and they are the leaders in their class. Even through the course of an eight-week session, you've got kids coming in at first and their parents are like, "I'm sorry he's so quiet," and you say, "No, no, they are soaking it in!" By the end, they're the ones knowing what comes next, and they're going to grab the instruments, and they're shouting the words in the spaces that you leave for them, and they're the ones running up and giving you a hug when it's all over. It shows you how easy it is to grow confidence in a child.

How do parents typically respond to their children's growth through Mindful Musicians?

I've never, ever, had a negative response to our class. I have had so many texts out of nowhere, emails out of nowhere, running into people at stores, parents signing up again and again, parents saying their child has been asking when they can sign up again. It's nothing but fun! It's nothing but great. I think the kids love it because whether they know it or not, it's feeding their brain. It's giving them something to latch onto. Kids also love getting to see their parents be silly. The kids love having one-on-one with their parents, which is what [Mindful Musicians] is. What kid isn't gonna want to do that? They want that time with their parents!

What is your favorite part of leading a Mindful Musicians class?

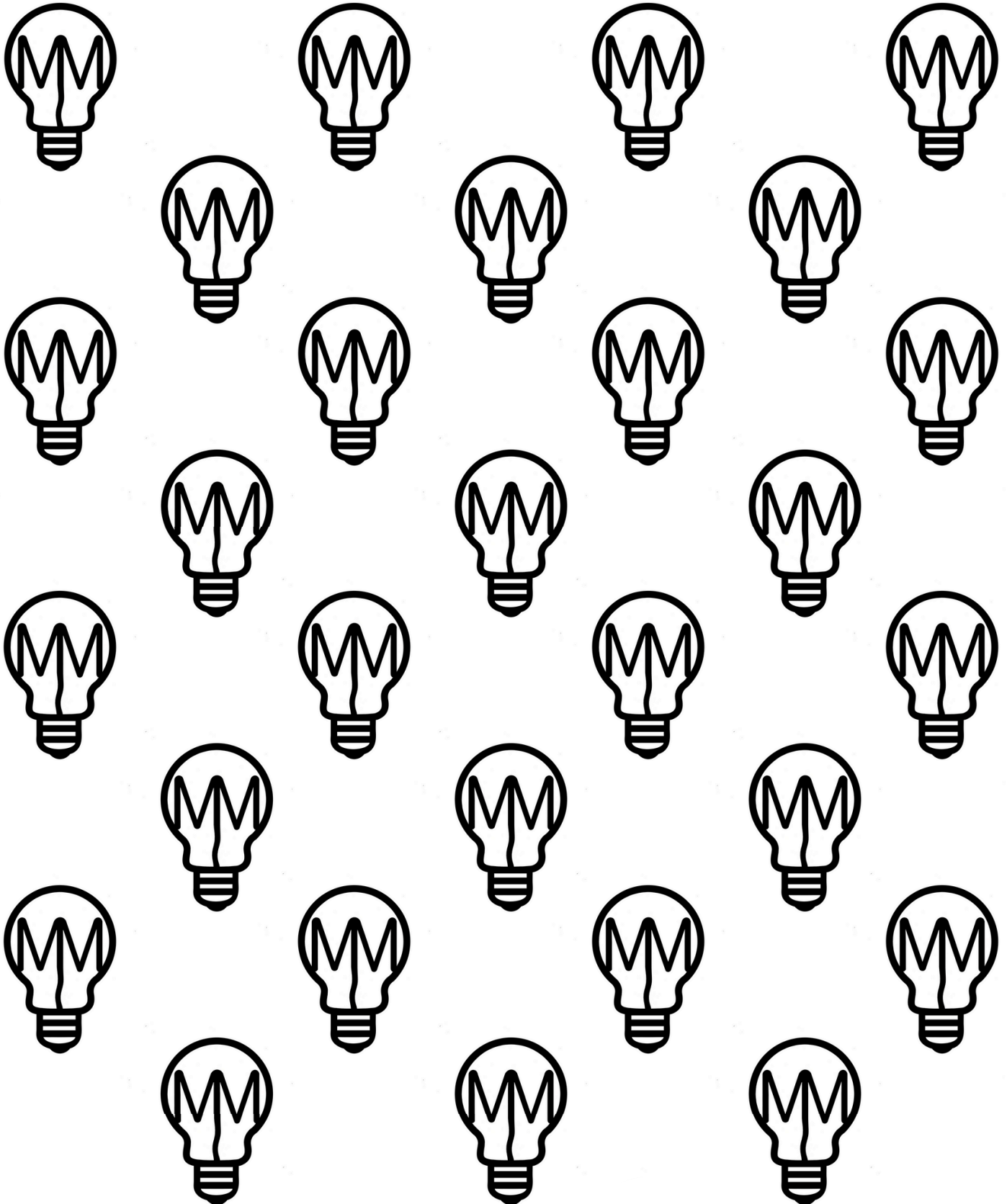
I discovered that I love little kids through Mindful Musicians. You have such a chance to teach a child that little because they're like little sponges. To see a baby in the class... sometimes they're just in the carrier. They can't walk yet! And they're kicking their legs to the music and shaking their shakers to the music. When they're six months old! That's incredible to me how quickly babies and little kids [can pick up music]. There's so much success that you can feel from teaching little kids.

How do you see Mindful Musicians evolving in the future?

What I would love is for Mindful Musicians to be a national thing that everyone knows about and loves and utilizes.

Color Your Emotions

Choose a color for your different emotions and make a little chart on the back with the name of the emotion next to the color. At the end of every day, choose a color that you think best represents your day.



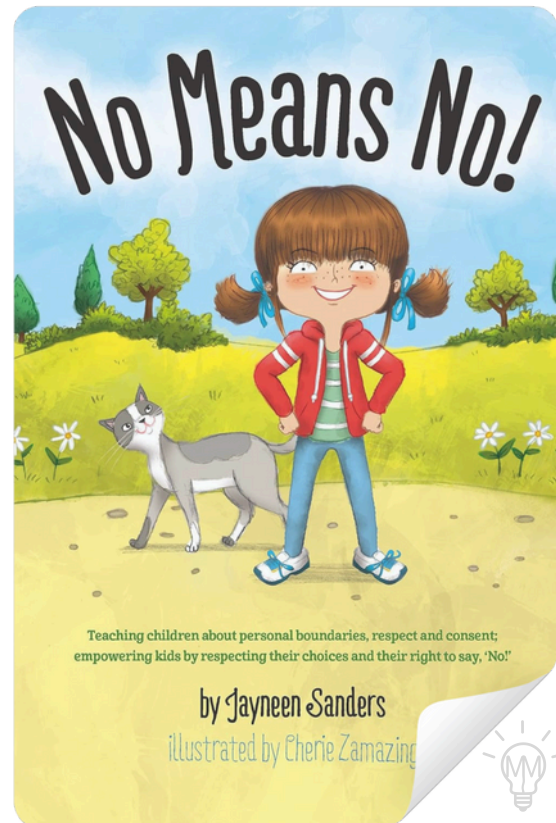
FROM PAGES TO PRACTICE

BY ANA MARIA LOCKE

This book review highlights books that parents might already be familiar with, but with a fresh perspective. Each book explores topics we sing about on the Mindful Musicians Green Album, offering new ways to connect music and meaningful lessons with your child

No Means No by Jayneen Sanders is a great book for older children who are learning to navigate becoming a big kid. This cute picture book provides real-life examples of situations kids may face and shows how easy it can be to say no. It reinforces that setting a boundary isn't rude—it's an important skill. Even though they may be small, their voice matters.

Like in our song *Chalk Talk*, we emphasize using real-life experiences and practicing these moments so children feel more comfortable, strong, and confident in setting boundaries.



Reflection Questions to use with your book:

Does telling a friend you don't want a hug mean you aren't friends anymore?

If a friend says they don't want to do something, what do you think we can say to respect their choice?

When I ask you to give my body space, how can you show that you love me and respect my boundary?

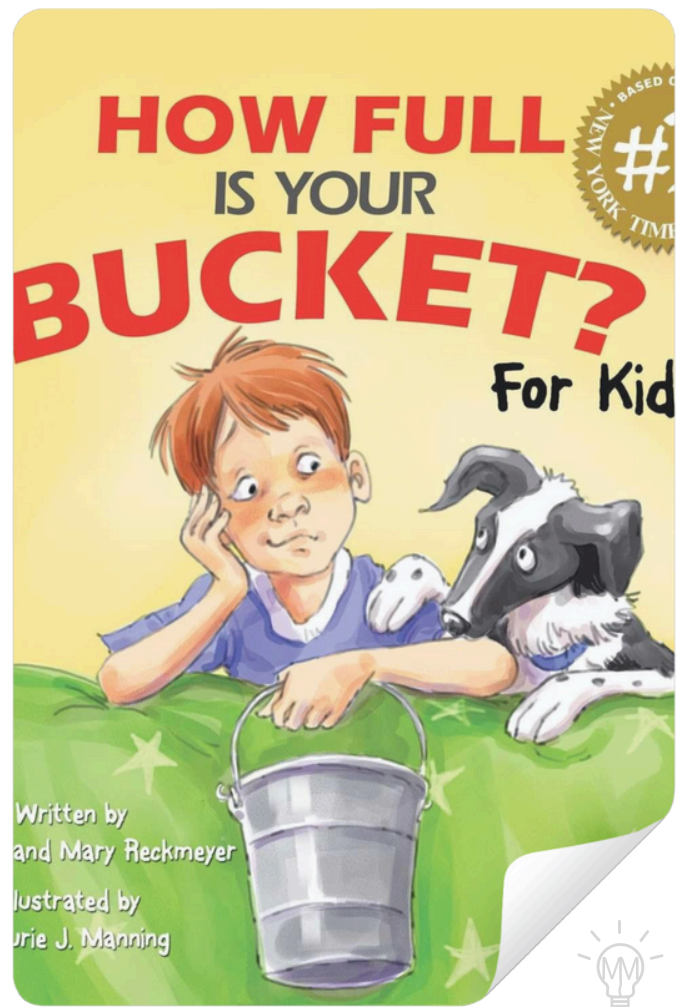
If you don't feel like giving someone a kiss or a hug, what can you say instead?

If you feel like you can't tell someone 'no' when you're uncomfortable, what can you do?

How can we tell that someone truly cares about us when we set a boundary?

How Full Is Your Bucket? by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer uses the metaphor of an invisible bucket to represent our joy. It teaches that everyone has a bucket, and when we mistreat others, we take from theirs, just as hard experiences can cause our own joy to drip away. The story highlights how an empty bucket can lead to negativity and pessimism, while a full bucket fosters kindness and positivity.

This book is a great introduction for kids to perspective-taking and self-care. When we learn to fill our own bucket, we gain the ability to uplift others as well. Just like in our song *Care-A-Beng*, sometimes unkindness isn't intentional—it can stem from not taking care of ourselves or allowing others to treat us in ways that don't lift us up.



Reflection Questions to use with your book:

What were some things that emptied the main character's bucket?

What are some things that emptied your bucket today? (Parents share your own appropriate examples to offer a moment of empathy and connection with your child.)

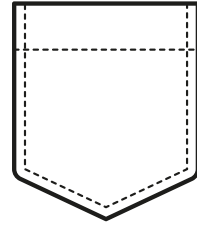
What were some things that filled the main character's bucket?

What are some things that filled your bucket today? (Again, parents share to help connect with your child.)

What are some things we can do every day to help fill our own bucket?

Why do you think it is hard to fill others' bucket when ours is empty?

POCKET PAUSE



Fold, cut, and create—a Pocket Pause to help you feel great!

DESCRIPTION

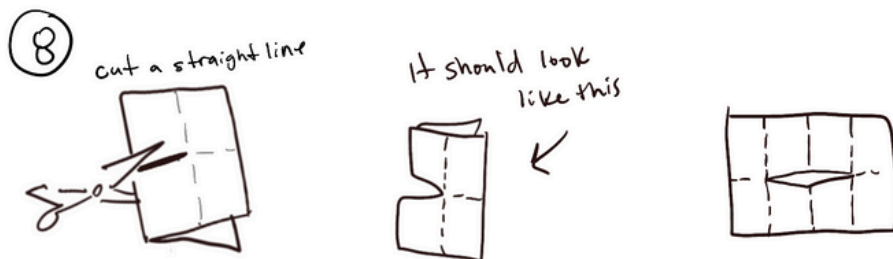
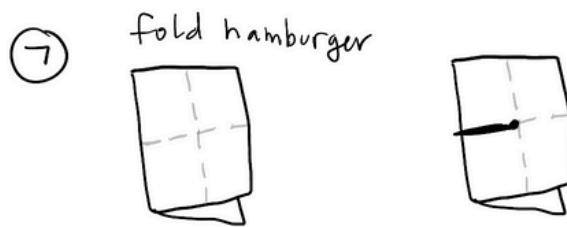
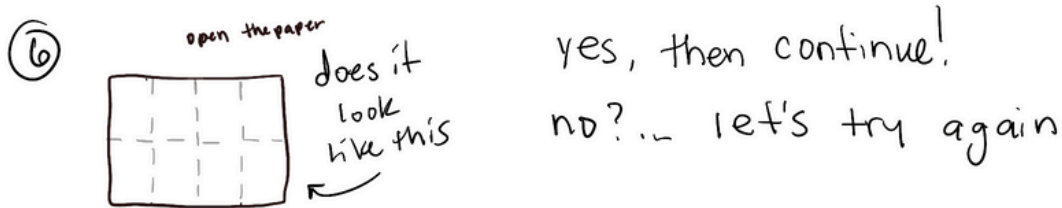
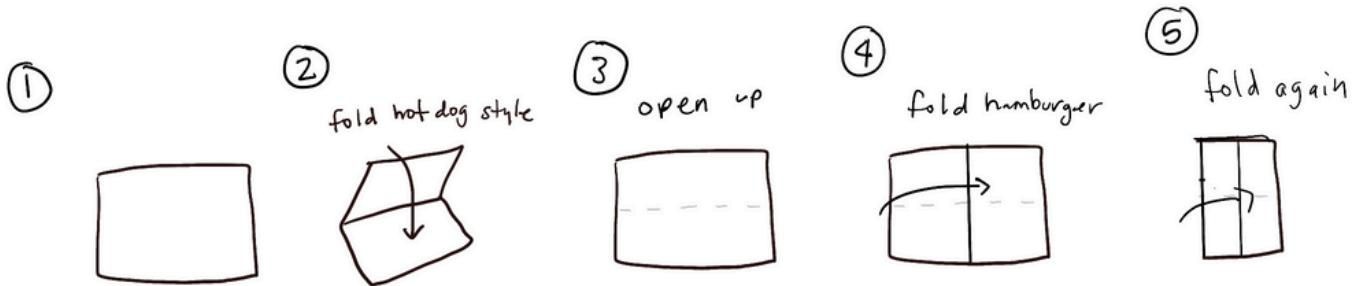
The Pocket Pause book is a small, portable tool designed to help kids calm down and feel better when they're having a tough time. It's filled with simple activities and calming ideas they can use to take a break, focus, and reset their emotions.

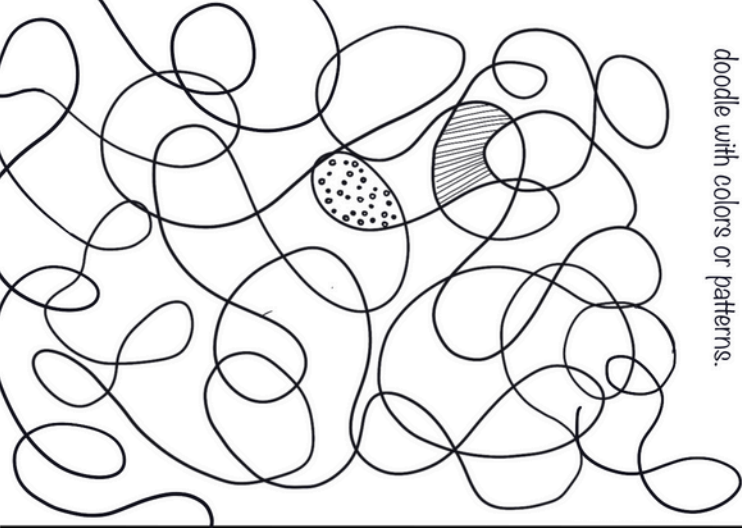
Easy to make and carry, the Pocket Pause empowers kids to practice self-regulation anytime, anywhere.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Print it out: Ask an adult to help you print the Pocket Pause page.
2. Fold it up: Follow the folding steps in the pictures carefully to make it into a book.
3. Cut the spot: Use scissors to cut along the line shown in the picture (ask for help if needed!).
4. Take it anywhere: Slip it into your pocket and use it when you need a moment to pause and relax!

Fold your Pocket Pause



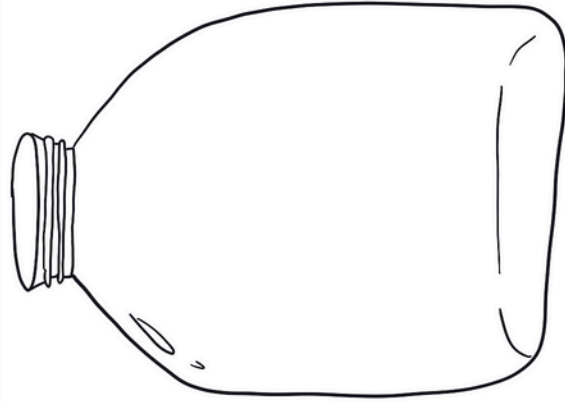


Fill in the spaces of this squiggly doodle with colors or patterns.

Choose colors for the different emotions and add your own in the key. Fill your jar with your emotions throughout your day!

Key

<input type="checkbox"/> anger	<input type="checkbox"/> fear	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> joy	<input type="checkbox"/> silliness	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

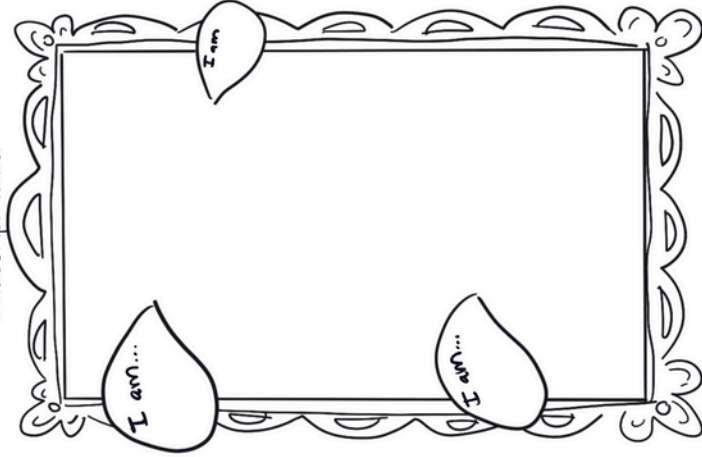


Word Search

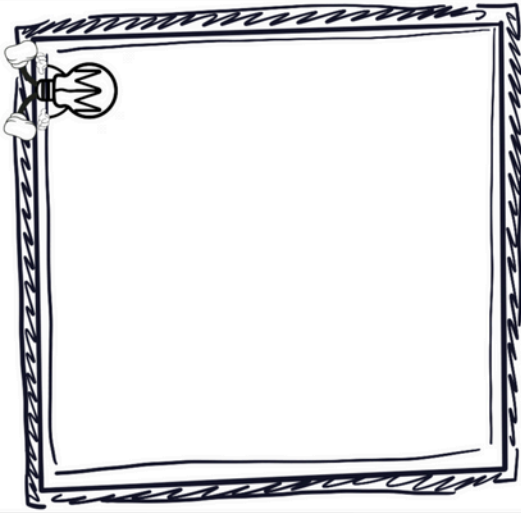
Patience Calm Kindness
Brave Curious Belong Love

P C A L M K
B H J D P I
T K L C U R E N
E N O A R E S
A G M S O N G

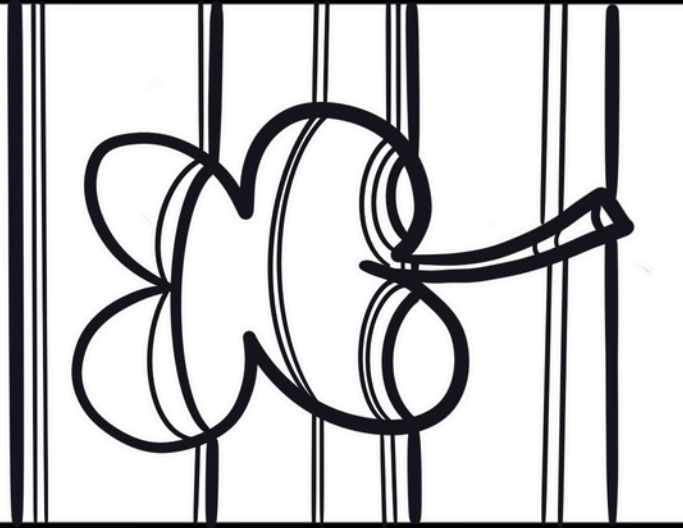
Draw your reflection here and fill the bubbles with compliments!



Can you draw a picture for Lumi of your favorite game to play?

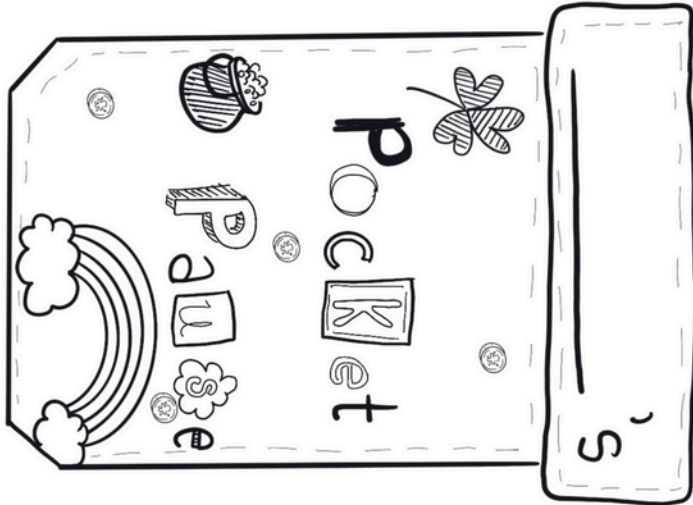
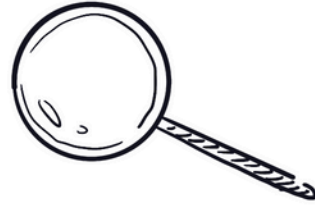


How many lines can you fill this space with? See the clover pop off the page!



I Spy

- ☐ Four green things
- ☐ Four shiny things
- ☐ A rainbow
- ☐ Something cold
- ☐ Something fluffy
- ☐ A hug
- ☐ The sky





Ask Callie

"Ask Callie" is your chance to submit questions about music, mindfulness, and parenting—where we answer commonly asked questions to support you and your family's journey.

Q: What's your advice for making music lessons more engaging for a child who loses interest easily?

Put it in the body! I've used this strategy so much to change things up and to teach concepts. In the beginning of our music journey, we understand sound before sight, so getting back to the bodily feeling of rhythm and music making is a great way to harness attention, shake up the energy, and provide an opportunity to teach in a way that caters to all learning styles.

Q: Do you have tips for creating a calming bedtime routine with music?

Begin by finding a song that matches the energy of your child's current state and then slowly choose songs that wind down in speed, volume, and complexity of sound. In music therapy land, this is considered the ISO principle. Meet where you are and then adjust to the most favorable landscape from there.

Q: How can I use songs to teach my child important social-emotional skills like empathy and kindness?

There will be times where unkind words come up during unfavorable activities at home. In these moments, sometimes I'll sing a phrase from one of the songs that is a favorable and familiar experience to make the approach softer and fun. Depending on their age, I may even ask my child if they know why I sang that right then, which can lead to a conversation about putting ourselves in another's shoes. I absolutely love when music can be the key to opening the door to growth.

Q: My child has a lot of energy. What kind of musical activities can help them channel it in a positive way?

If they are wanting to play an instrument, drums are fantastic instrument to release energy, and the best part is that many household (or even outdoor) items can 'act' as drums. Similarly, you can 'play' drums anytime with body percussion. Encourage them to make funny sounds and give them tasks that release energy, like stomps and claps. When in doubt, a good ol' fashion dance party never fails as a positive way to release energy. Remember to celebrate all the ways your kid finds their moves (as long as they are staying safe), so they continue to gain confidence in playfulness and exploration without feeling embarrassed.

Q: What's the best age to start introducing music as a tool for mindfulness and emotional growth?

Zero! Honestly, babies begin hearing at four months in utero! Their heart rate is positively impacted by the soothing tones of their caregivers humming and singing. Their brain activity becomes more synchronized with every rhythmic experience they have. Specifically regarding mindfulness and emotional growth, however, use our songs based on feelings to help them recognize and name what different emotions they are feeling. Encourage them to feel it and allow another to take its place when the time comes. In short, we are experiencing emotions from the moment we arrive on this earth; why not start helping our kids navigate that experience as soon as possible? Music is a beautiful tool to do so that doesn't require cognition to understand the 'feel' of it. This is the concept of sound before sight and can be applied to even the littlest learner.

Q: Are there any specific types of music that promote relaxation or focus for kids during homework time?

Typically, instrumental music is best for assisting kids with focus during homework time. Finding the right type of music with a mild beat (not so intense to be distracting, but not so calming to be sleep inducing) is key. In regards to relaxation, finding songs with a slower speed (tempo) and an even milder beat than the focus music will assist in relaxation. Words are okay with relaxation, especially if they are affirmative and positive. Stay tuned for a whole album of Mindful Musicians songs that fit that niche!

Q: How do I balance encouraging my child to practice music with letting them just have fun and explore?

This can be tricky! In my view, the most important aspect to learning is intrinsic motivation, so I'm always inclined to let that lead the way. However, I also understand that it's important for the child to continue to evolve in their development, which cannot always be accomplished with independent play. I would recommend finding an instructor that can understand their motivation and make teachable moments out of it. However, if your child is engaged in a more formal type of learning experience, I would say laying out a visual time chart of expectations can be effective. Allow them the first 5-10 min to independently play, next 5-10 to focus on what is being asked, and a final couple of minutes to choose what they would like to do.



To submit your questions, email Callie at callie@mindfulmusicians.org



UNLOCKING THE LYRICS: CHALK TALK

By Ana Maria Locke

We all remember the “No” phase of our child’s development. Maybe you’re still in it. Ugh. It can be exhausting. It fills you with frustration, and you take deep breaths, trying to correct it. You go through all the steps, hoping that one day this phase will pass and won’t return in some regression down the road.

Now, what I’m about to say might make you groan, but stick with me. I think by the end, we’ll be on the same page. Our kids need to learn how to say “No.” Setting boundaries is an essential skill, and teaching your child to do this before they enter school or daycare is crucial.

Our song “Chalk Talk” is designed to help kids navigate playground interactions, using different scenarios where they may need the confidence, skill, and ability to say “No.” One of the best ways to reinforce this is through pretend play. Grab some toys and act out scenarios from the song. Have the toy practice saying, “No, thank you. I don’t like that.” Let your child take a turn, then introduce a pushback moment. Have the toy say, “But it’s fun for me!” This teaches your child that if it’s not fun for everyone, it’s not fun. Show them how to set that boundary clearly and then go to a trusted adult (or in this case, a “grown-up” stuffed animal) for help.

Beyond play, modeling this at home is powerful. If your child doesn’t want to be hugged, tickled, or picked up, respect that.

Are there exceptions? Of course. Boundaries work both ways. For example, if your child refuses bedtime and declares, “No! This is my body! I don’t want to go to bed!” we’ve all been there. There’s a way to respect their autonomy while maintaining your boundary. Try saying, “You can choose to walk upstairs or be carried. If you don’t choose, I will carry you because you need sleep, and right now, you’re not making a healthy choice for yourself.” Simple. Short. Clear.

Children will push boundaries. It’s part of their development. But giving them safe opportunities to practice saying “No” empowers them to set boundaries when they’re outside the safety of your arms.

"Giving kids the power to say 'No' helps keep them safe."

CHALK TALK

Hey It's okay, It's okay to say no

This is my body and that's why I know

x2

If you're playing too rough and that's not how I roll

I'm gonna tell you NO!

Hey It's okay, It's okay to say no

This is my body and that's why I know

x2

There are parts of my body that are only for me

If you try to touch them I'll tell you NO!

Hey It's okay, It's okay to say no

This is my body and that's why I know

x2

If I don't want to be tickled or lifted up high

I'm gonna tell you NO!

Hey It's okay, It's okay to say no

This is my body and that's why I know

x2



“Chalk Talk” - Green, Yellow, NO!

Materials Needed:

- Printouts
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils

Description:

Green, Yellow, NO! is an interactive activity that helps kids practice recognizing and expressing their comfort levels in different situations. Using colored lightbulbs (red, yellow, and green), children learn to set boundaries and communicate their feelings clearly and confidently.

Instructions:

Step 1: Choose Your Activity Version

For Younger Kids: Use the three large lightbulbs. The kids color and hold them up during each scenario.

For Older Kids: They complete a worksheet with small lightbulbs next to each scenario and color the lightbulb that matches how they would feel/react.

Step 2: Explain the Lightbulb System

Green Lightbulb: "I feel safe and happy to say yes!"

Yellow Lightbulb: "I'm uncomfortable. I need to say no or ask for help."

Red Lightbulb: "I'm saying NO because I don't feel safe or this is not okay."

Option 1: Lightbulb Signs (Younger Kids)

1. Color and decorate the three lightbulbs (one red, one yellow, one green).
2. As each scenario is read aloud, hold up the lightbulb that matches how you would feel.

Option 2: Scenario Worksheet (Older Kids)

1. Students will read each scenario and color the lightbulb next to it that matches how they would feel:
Green: "Safe and happy"
Yellow: "Unsure or uncomfortable"
Red: "No, this is not okay"



“Chalk Talk” - Green, Yellow, NO!

Step 3: Practice with 20 Scenarios

Read the scenarios aloud for younger kids or provide the worksheet for older kids to complete independently.

Step 4: Practice Boundary Phrases

Encourage kids to practice what they might say in each situation:

Green Lightbulb:

"Yes, I'm okay with that!"

"I feel good about this."

Yellow Lightbulb:

"I'm not sure, I need to think."

"I don't feel comfortable right now."

Red Lightbulb:

"No, I don't like that."

"Stop, I'm not okay with this."

Step 5: Reflection Questions

"Was it easy or hard to decide how you felt?"

"What can you do if someone doesn't listen when you say no?"

"Who are safe adults you can talk to if you feel uncomfortable?"

"If someone gives you a **Red Light** because of what you are doing, what can you say?"























“Chalk Talk” - Green, Yellow, NO!

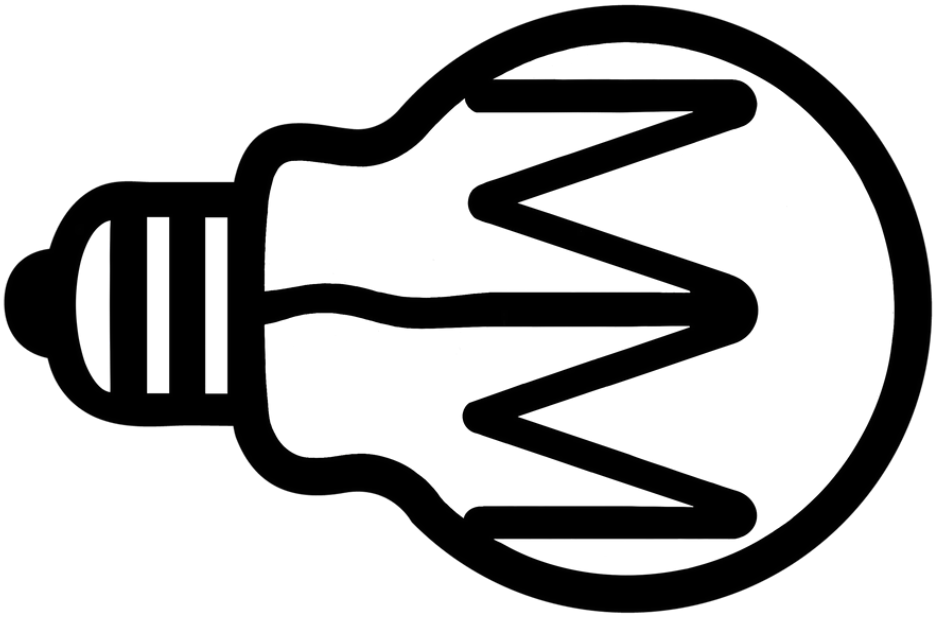
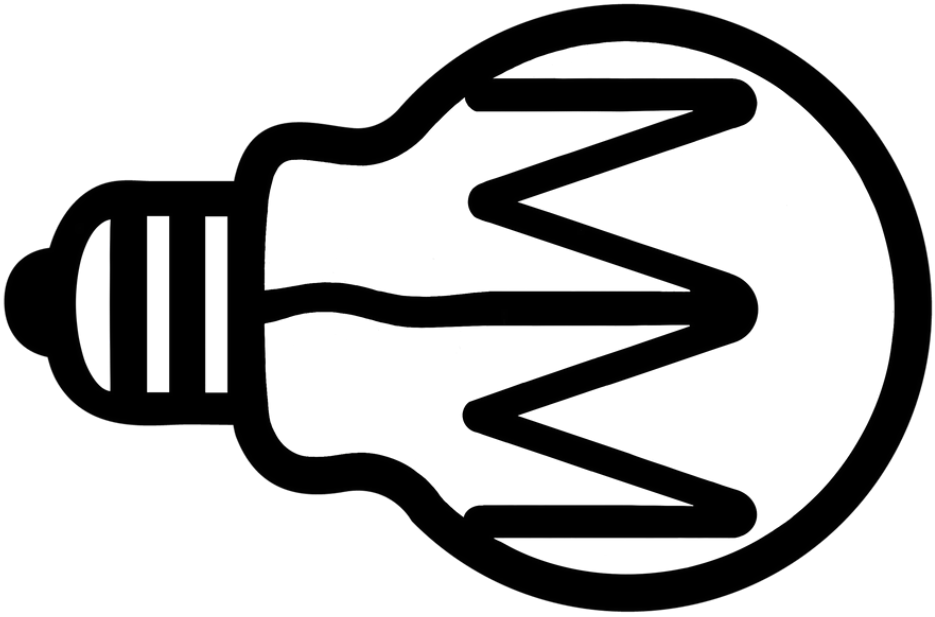
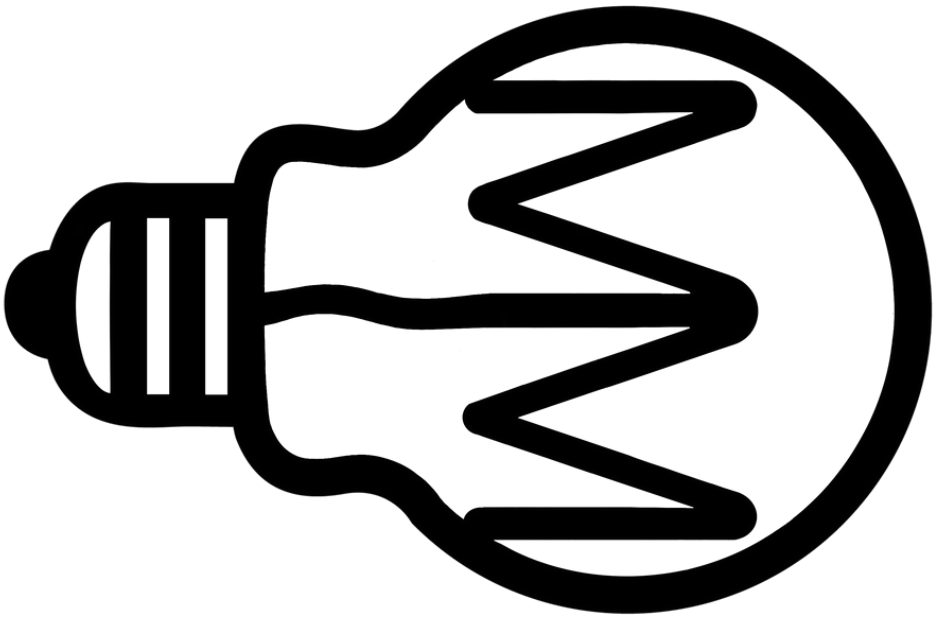
In the song "Chalk Talk," we explore different times when you might want to say “no”, but not every "no" is the same! In this activity, you'll read each scenario and color the lightbulb that matches how you feel.

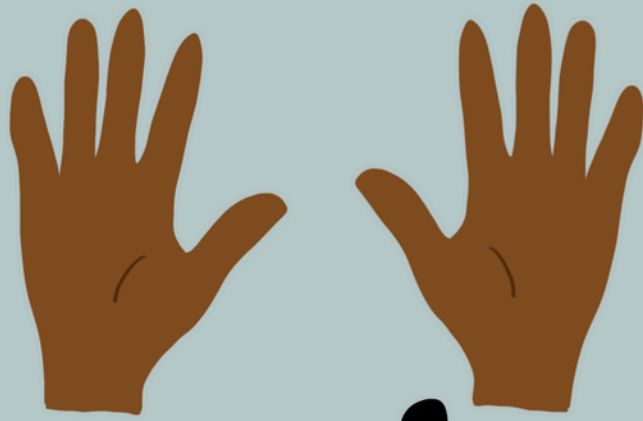
Green means you feel totally comfortable saying yes.

Yellow means you're unsure, you might need to ask for help or say, "No, thank you."

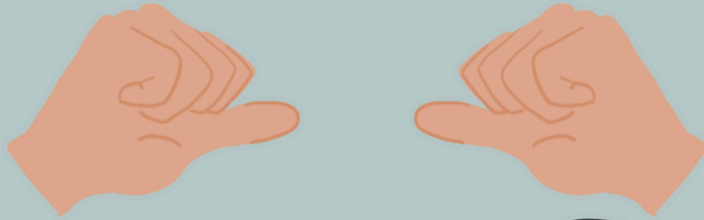
Red means you do not want to do it, and you give a strong, “No.”

1. A friend asks if you want to play your favorite game. 
2. Someone tries to take a toy out of your hands without asking. 
3. Your teacher asks you to help hand out supplies. 
4. A classmate keeps poking you after you ask them to stop. 
5. A cousin wants to hold your hand, but you don't feel comfortable. 
6. A grown-up you trust asks for a high-five. 
7. A new friend asks to sit with you at lunch. 
8. Someone at the park wants you to leave with them to see their new puppy. 
9. A sibling wants to share a snack with you. 
10. A classmate makes fun of your drawing. 
11. A friend wants a hug, but you are feeling shy. 
12. A neighbor asks if you want to play outside. 
13. Someone wants to take a picture of you, and you don't know them well. 
14. A coach asks if you'd like to join the team. 
15. A friend keeps asking for your phone number, but you don't want to share it. 
16. A family member wants a hug, but you don't feel like hugging. 
17. A friend tells you a secret and says you can't tell anyone, even if it worries you. 
18. A classmate offers to trade their toy for yours. 
19. Your grown-up asks you to hold their hand when crossing the street. 
20. A friend wants to play a game that makes you feel scared. 





Boundaries

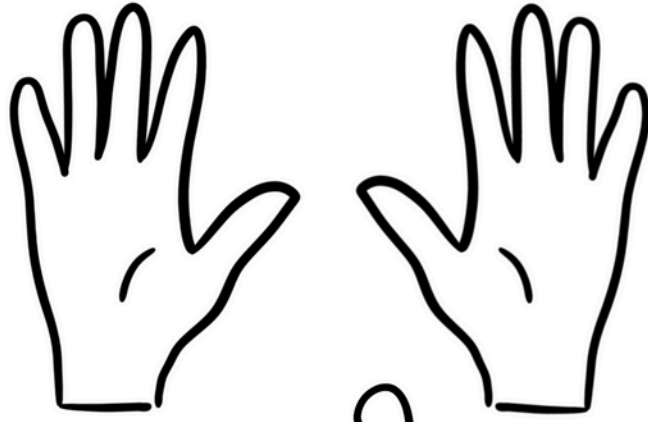


Keep Us

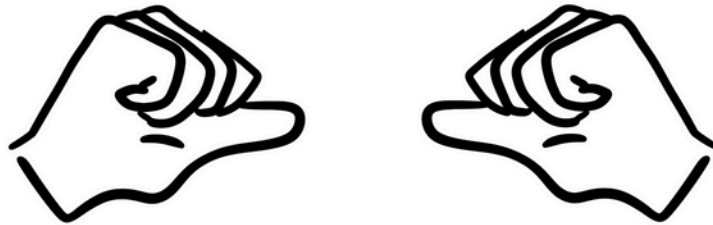


Safe





Boundaries



Keep Us

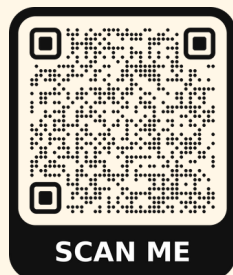
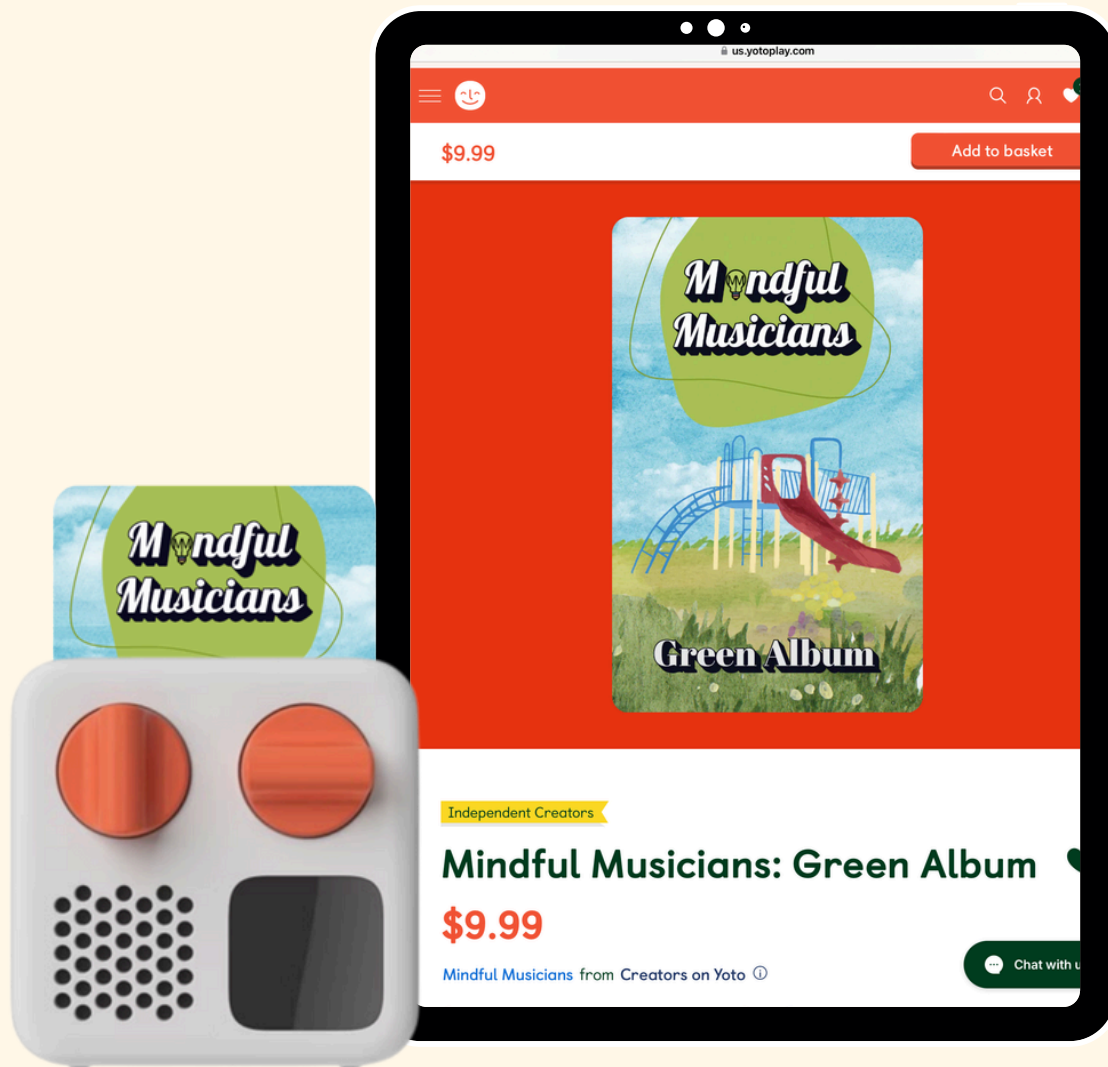


Safe



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