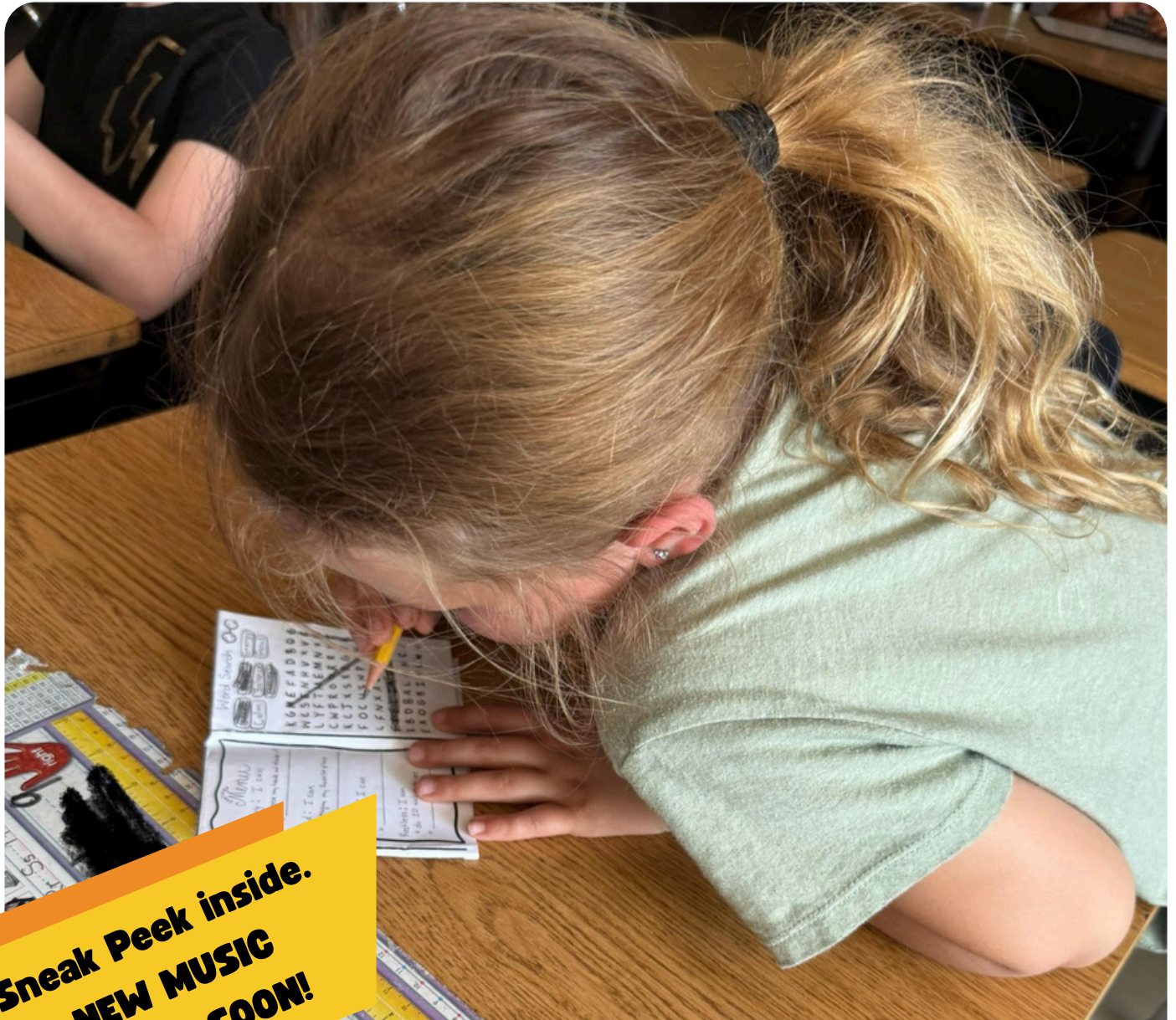


MINDFUL MUSICIANS

JULY 2025 — ISSUE 6



**Sneak Peek inside.
NEW MUSIC
Coming SOON!**

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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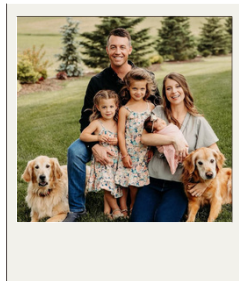
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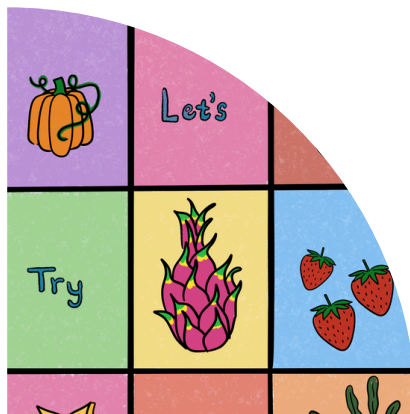
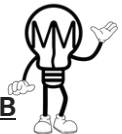
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This month's craft gets kids excited about fruits and veggies while sneaking in reading practice and teaching them to clap and keep a steady beat—making it a well-rounded, brain-boosting activity just like the foods it's inspired by!



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Monthly Inspirational Poster





HELLO, FROM CALLIE

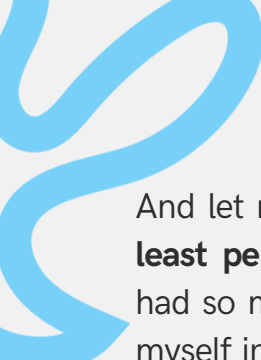
Breathe Through It

Let's be honest - there are moments in this parenthood journey that feel impossibly hard. Not because we are doing it wrong, but because it **is** hard.

So many of us entered this season with wide eyes and full hearts, maybe even lifelong dreams of being a parent. We imagined snuggles, laughter, milestones, and memories - and we got those, yes. But we also got the unspoken truth: the deep exhaustion, the emotional overwhelm, the quiet frustration that builds when everyone else's needs scream louder than our own.

This month, I want to offer you something simple: **permission to feel it all** -and to keep choosing how you show up anyway.

Frustration will come. It's a given. But what we do with it: that's where the power lies. The challenge (and opportunity) of caregiving is to keep our eyes on something bigger than the moment of overwhelm. It's to model the very regulation we hope to teach our kids, even when we ourselves are still learning how.



And let me be honest with you: **I am the least perfect parent of all of us.** I have had so many moments where I've caught myself in the very behavior I coach others to manage - where I feel the sting of hypocrisy, standing there as a professional who teaches emotional regulation, yet personally wrestling with my own. It's humbling. And human.

But one thing I've learned, one of the most powerful tools I've discovered and now try to model, is the art of taking space. Walking away, resetting, breathing. It's not weakness. It's wisdom. It's strength. It's a signal to our children that even grown-ups need a moment to find their calm.

And that's where breath comes in.

Your breath is with you all day long; anchoring, guiding, reminding you that you're alive and capable of starting fresh in any moment. With every inhale, you have a chance to choose a mantra that supports you. For me, sometimes it's:

- Inhale the future, exhale the past.
- Inhale calm, exhale chaos.

Whatever words speak to you, let your breath become a practice of presence. The more aware we are of our own bodies and inner experience, the more effectively we can model regulation to our kids; not because we're always calm, but because we're always growing.

Many of us are navigating uncharted territory - trying to teach emotional resilience to our children while still figuring out how to cope with our own emotions. We are also often renegotiating our relationships with our own parents; trying to honor where we came from while choosing something new for our families.

This is sacred work. Messy work. Important work.

If you're feeling like it takes superhuman strength just to get through some days, I want you to know: you are not alone. You are not broken. You are doing one of the most complex, soul-stretching jobs there is: raising a family while healing, growing, and showing up for yourself, too.

So this month, take a breath. Take a beat. Let this magazine be a soft landing spot, a reminder that your effort matters and your love is seen - even when your patience wears thin. And flip to page 13 for more on this topic...

You're not the only one walking this road, and you don't have to do it perfectly. Just keep walking.

With you in the fog and the light,

Callie Fitzgerald

Fruits and Veggies Seek and Find

sharp

⤿ fermata

b flat

⏵ half note

♩ treble clef

⏶ quarter note

* ^{Bonus} a hidden cat



Fruits and Veggies Seek and Find

sharp

⤿ fermata

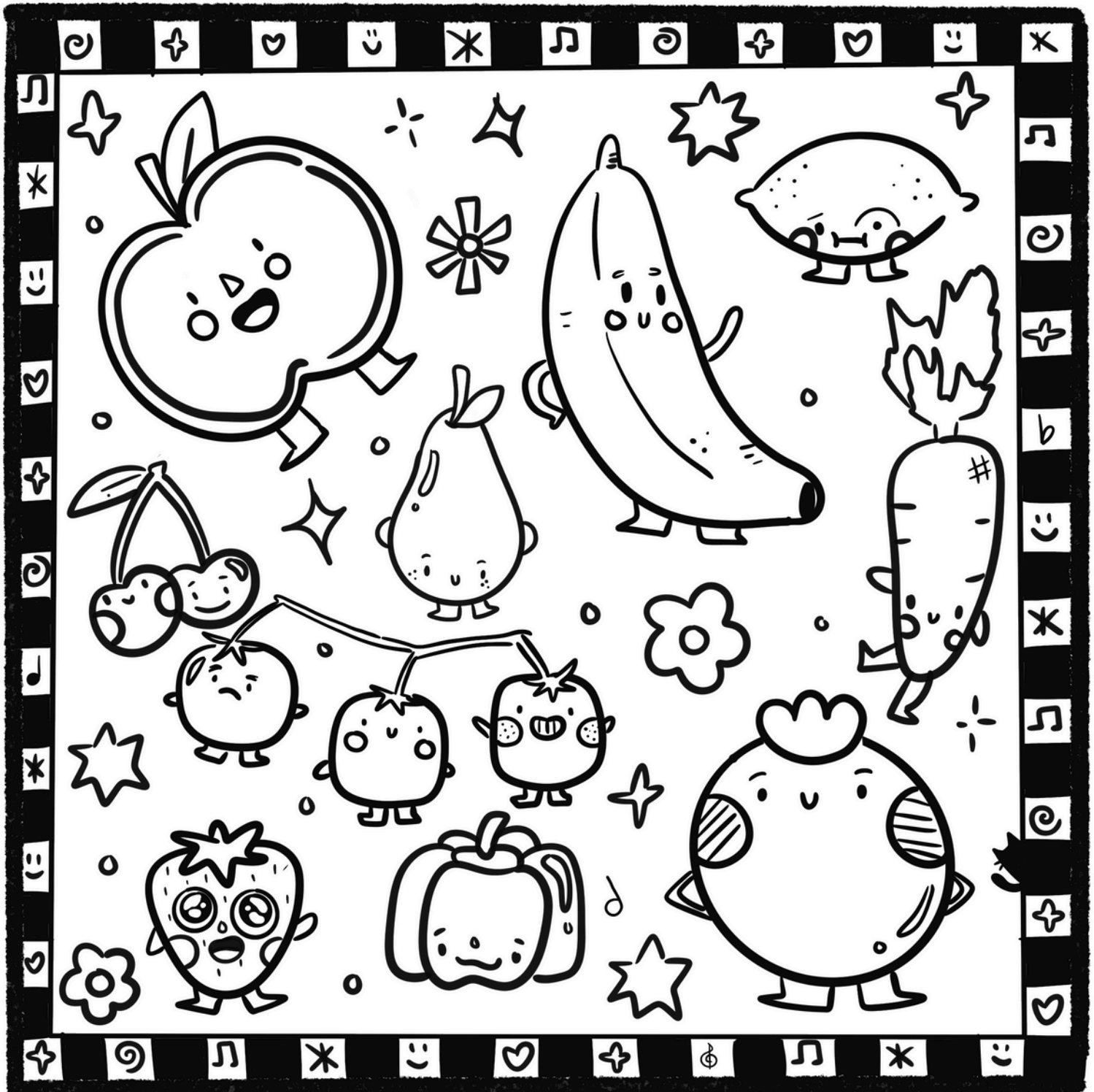
b flat

⏵ half note

♩ treble clef

♩ quarter note

* ^{Bonus} a hidden cat



VOICES IN PRACTICE: KATELYN MCDERMOTT PART 1

In this new interview series, we spotlight families and educators who are bringing Mindful Musicians into their homes and classrooms. By sharing real-life stories, we hope to inspire others to see the many ways Mindful Musicians can be used outside of the group setting—to build connection, spark creativity, and support emotional growth in everyday life.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.



Katelyn McDermott is originally from Dubuque, IA, where she was born and raised. She and her husband, both proud graduates of the University of Iowa, are now navigating life with their three energetic daughters and their two lovable golden retrievers.

With a background as a Child Life Specialist, Katelyn transitioned to being a stay-at-home mom, a role she cherishes deeply. The family finds joy at the lake, which they consider their happy place. Katelyn is passionate about community support, actively serving on local boards and committees that focus on promoting positive brain health and providing valuable resources and family-friendly events in her area.

Before becoming a parent, what did you imagine raising a child would be like?

I think when I imagined what being a parent would be like, I thought about all of the good things, the positive things. The exciting moments that people talk about when welcoming your child into the world, and what that experience is like—becoming a parent and getting to know your child, getting to know yourself. So I think, you know, becoming a parent you think of all the smaller moments in life. Those first cuddles, going off to preschool or kindergarten.

What were your biggest hopes—and your biggest fears—about the kind of parent you would be?

For me, I've had the opportunity to spend a lot of time with my kiddos. So really, the hope of being a connected parent is something that is important to me. And now with three little ones, I've had the opportunity to stay with them full-time, which is a really unique thing. My hope is to be a parent that can be there for my kids during the hard times, the good times—to be their biggest cheerleader and supporter.

My biggest fear is letting down our kids. There are times when our kids aren't going to be happy, and that's something we have to work through, but just letting them down on big things and making sure we can truly show up in a time when there's so much going on. So those fears of how you show up and being intentional in how you show up with your kids while managing everything else that happens in life.

When your first child was born, how did those early days shift your understanding of what parenting would be?

Each chapter is different. I think a lot of the time we don't really have an understanding of what parenting is going to be like. Parenting is different for each family depending on what your values are, your background, what your support system looks like. So I think it's really about understanding who you are in those early moments of parenting—how you respond to your triggers, your support. Do you lean into it? Are you someone who can reach out and ask for it? Are you someone who maybe sits back and waits for someone to offer?

Did you have ideas about what kind of child you would raise, or what childhood should feel like for them?

I come from a blended family. So, I think when I thought about what it would be like to start my own family, there was a lot of importance around togetherness. Making sure that those moments that may seem small—some of those traditions that may have been lost for me, like family dinners, everyone sitting down, slowing down and spending time together—those are things I look forward to. We sit down for dinner and reflect on our day. We talk about what their favorite part of the day is and the worst part of their day.

What parts of parenting turned out to be harder than you expected?

I think what has been harder is being in tune with everyone's needs and feelings—especially with multiple littles. That's something I've found more challenging than expected. We're in a season where everyone needs Mom, and balancing three littles who all need Mom at the same time can be hard. Helping them develop their own coping skills, being patient when the youngest is being fed, or a game is interrupted because a sibling wakes up from a nap, or one is getting more attention in the moment than the other.

What messages do you think society sends parents about how we're supposed to raise kids or manage emotions?

I feel like there's a lot of noise out there for parents and it's so overwhelming. Deep down we're all just trying to do our best with the resources and support we have, but everywhere you look someone is offering an opinion—solicited or unsolicited—and not necessarily offering support alongside it.

I feel like we are a generation really trying to raise emotionally intelligent children, but we don't always get the support. When we reach out to older generations they may laugh and say, "What do the books say about that?" as if it's silly to seek guidance, but there's research about why certain things work and why others don't. I feel like many parents today are working hard to support their children's emotional needs, to give them coping skills and tools because they want them to be strong, mature adults—but they are also trying to shift the perspectives of older generations who maybe didn't get that support growing up. We're trying to gently shift that language and perspective. It's not easy, but I think there are parents today working to bridge that gap and create opportunities for our children.

Look for Part 2 of our conversation with Katelyn in next month's issue!

FROM PAGES TO PRACTICE

BY ANA MARIA LOCKE

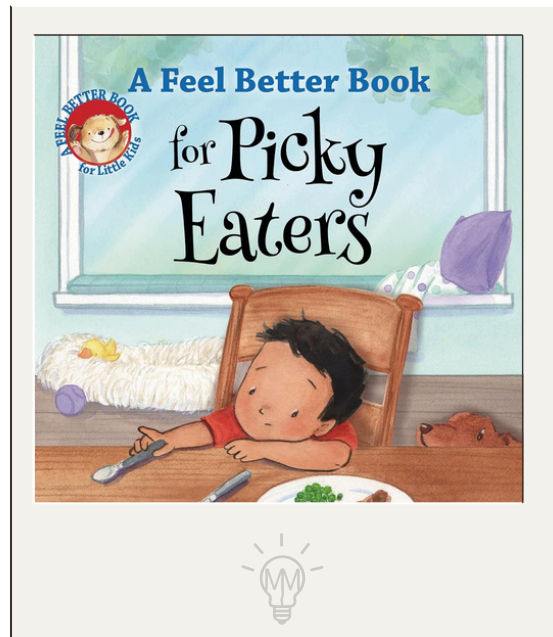
This book review highlights books that parents might already be familiar with, but with a fresh perspective. Each book explores topics we sing about on the Mindful Musicians Green Album, offering new ways to connect music and meaningful lessons with your child

A Feel Better Book for Picky Eaters

By Holly Brochmann & Leah Bowen

This book isn't just for kids—it's a great reminder for grown-ups, too. No child eats without making a mess. For many adults, it can be hard to watch: the spills, the squishes, the food being touched, sniffed, or licked instead of eaten.

A Feel Better Book for Picky Eaters shows us that these “messy” moments are actually powerful learning tools. They help kids build confidence and comfort around food at their own pace.



This story takes a gentle, encouraging approach to picky eating. It reassures kids (and parents) that it's okay to feel unsure—and that exploring food doesn't have to mean swallowing it. Just like adults might need time to warm up to something new, children often need time, freedom, and play to feel safe trying unfamiliar foods.

Even something as simple as a blueberry can taste different from one to the next. This book reminds us to slow down, stay curious, and let the journey be just as valuable as the bite.

Reflection Questions to use with your book:

1. What's something that used to feel “too different” for you but doesn't anymore?
2. If you were a picky eater superhero, what would your name be?
3. What's one food you've changed your mind about lately?
4. Can you draw a food that feels a little silly or scary to you?
5. If your food had a voice, what would it say?

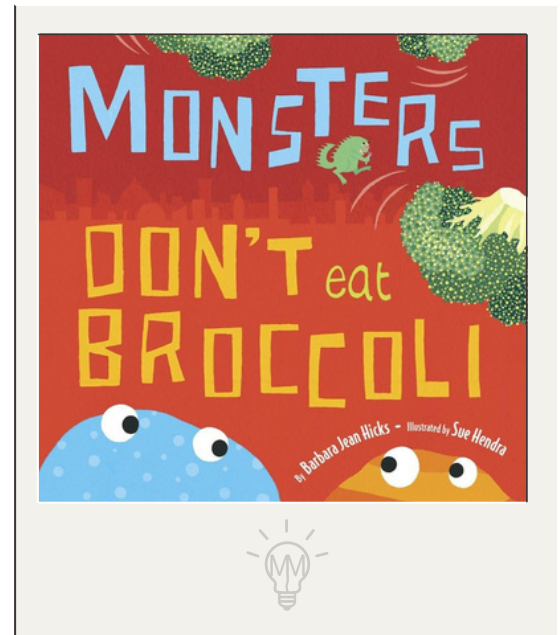
****Tip* After they answer, offer your personal experiences as a child and adult to build connection and show empathy.***

FROM PAGES TO PRACTICE

PART 2

Getting kids excited about vegetables should be considered an Olympic sport. Some children will happily munch on anything green... while others would rather lick the floor than eat carrot, and we love the both!

That's why we love books that start conversations—especially books that make you laugh. In *Monsters Don't Eat Broccoli* by Barbara Jean Hicks, a group of loud, silly monsters insist that they do not eat vegetables. But as the story unfolds, we discover (to everyone's surprise!) that these “monsters” are eating all sorts of healthy things!



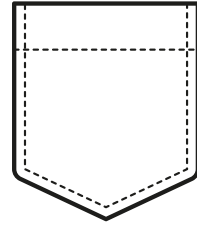
This book reminds us that using our imaginations can make new foods feel less intimidating. When we turn vegetables into dragons, trees, silly shapes, or anything else we dream up, we take the pressure off and invite play in.

Pair this story with our Fruits and Veggies song to create a joyful, low-pressure experience around exploring food. Reading, singing, laughing, and pretending are powerful tools to help kids feel safe trying something new

Reflection Questions to use with your book:

1. How does your fruit or vegetable feel? Is it hard or soft?
2. How does it smell? Is it strong or gentle?
3. Can you squish it with your fingers? What color does it turn when you do?
4. What does it feel like on your lips or tongue?
5. Is it crunchy or soft on your teeth?
6. Does it taste sweet, sour, bitter, or something else?
7. The monsters in the book said broccoli could be trees—
What could your vegetable be? A spaceship? A flower? A tiny umbrella?

POCKET PAUSE



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

DESCRIPTION

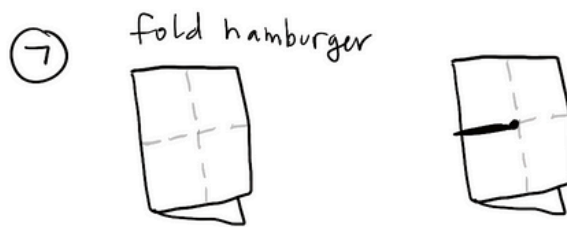
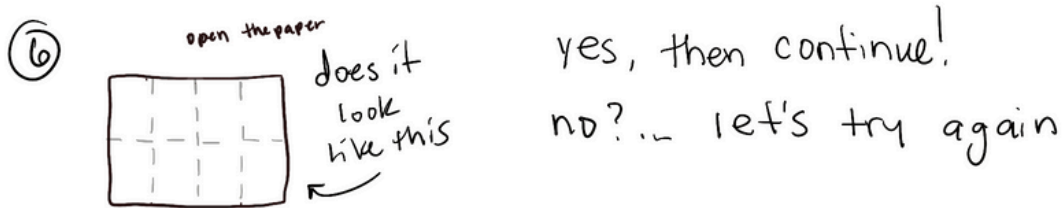
The Pocket Pause book is a small, portable tool designed to help kids calm down and feel better when they're having a tough time. It's filled with simple activities and calming ideas they can use to take a break, focus, and reset their emotions.

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

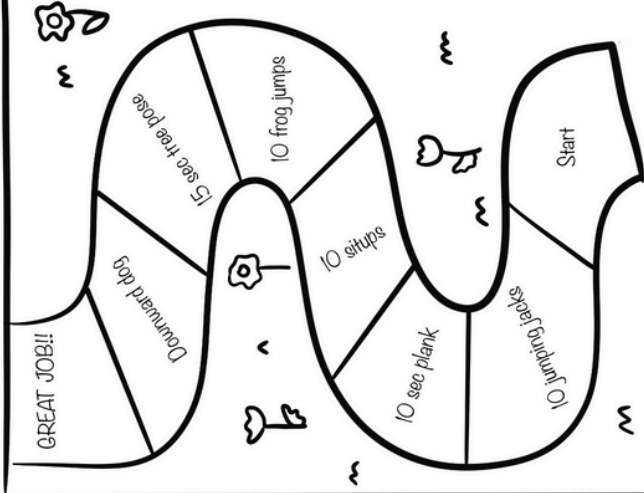




I Spy

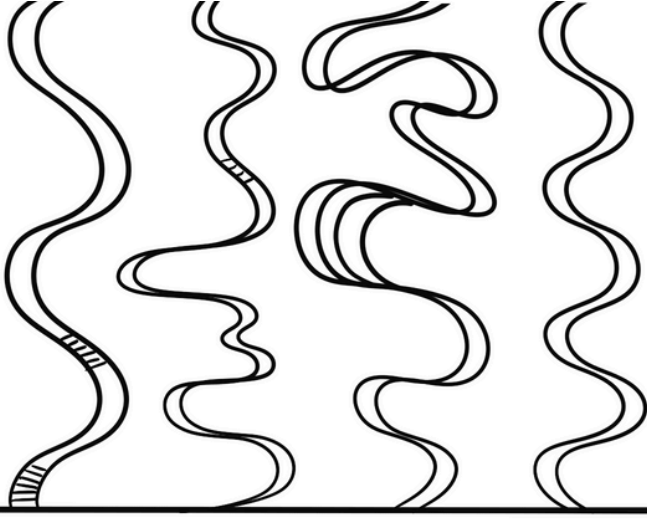
- ☐ The colors of the rainbow
- ☐ 4 fuzzy things
- ☐ 3 shiny things
- ☐ 2 living things
- ☐ 1 big hug
- ☐ 4 slow breaths
- ☐ Grass
- ☐ Fresh air

Super mega challenge of the day! Can you make it to the end? Can you make it to the end?
Color in each tile that you complete



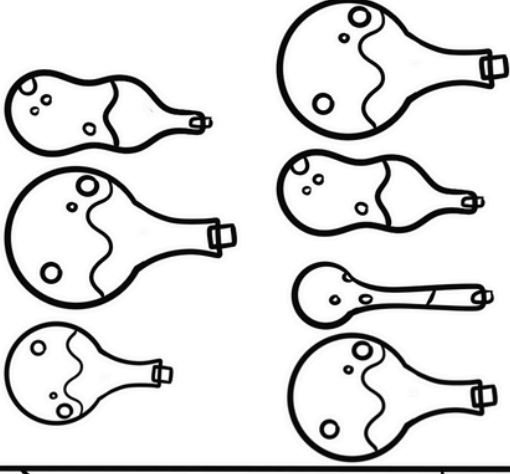
Find these words
sunshine strong kind funny
summer joy brave

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

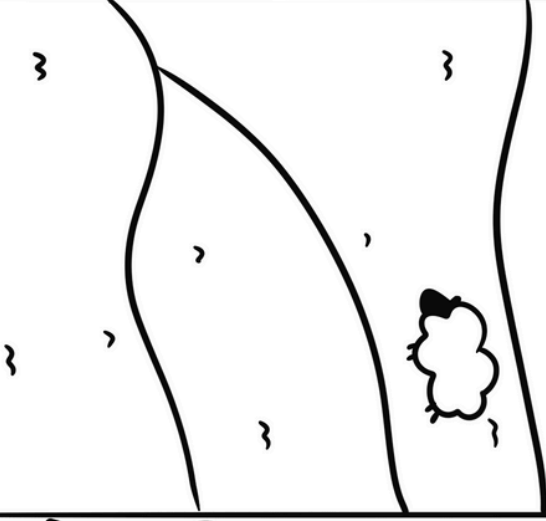


Add as many lines and squiggles as you can then color, your beautiful piece of art

What emotions have you felt today? If each of these magical bottles was filled with those emotions which bottle would be for which emotion? Choose and then color each one.



For every thing you tidy today,
add one sheep to your pasture



Page

COLOR

THINK



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.

Q1: I find myself snapping at my kids even when I'm trying so hard to stay calm. What can I do in the moment?

A: First - breathe. Truly. One of the most effective tools we have is also the most accessible. Try this: Inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4 (and start again). It tells your body you are safe, and it gives your brain space to respond instead of react. Also, give yourself compassion. We all snap sometimes. Repair is powerful. A simple "I'm sorry, I was overwhelmed. I love you and I'm working on handling my emotions, too" goes a long way.

Q2: I feel overwhelmed with the mental load of parenting. How do I regulate when my brain feels fried?

A: Mental fatigue is real. I recommend building in micro-pauses throughout the day -just 30-seconds to close your eyes, feel your breath, or step outside. Even one deep breath paired with a grounding phrase like "This is hard, and I can do hard things" can shift your nervous system. Regulation doesn't have to be big-it just has to be consistent.

Q3: What's one regulation tool that even young toddlers can learn?

A: I love teaching a simple "smell the flower, blow the candles" breath. You can even use your finger to inhale while pretending to smell a flower, exhale as if blowing out a birthday candle. You are building the habit early, and making it playful. I'm reminded of just how young this skill can be learned in witnessing my almost 1-year old practicing breathing in playful moments (celebration to follow, of course)! Music also helps: slow humming can bring calm to both of you!

Q4: My partner and I are not always on the same page when it comes to emotional parenting. What do I do?

A: This is so common. Start by approaching it with curiosity, not blame. Share why modeling emotional awareness matters to you and how you're learning too. Invite your partner into the process rather than pointing out what's wrong. You might be surprised how powerful it is to say, "I'm working on this myself, and I'd love for us to grow together."

Ask Callie continued

Q5: What do I do when I am overstimulated by noise & chaos but can't get away from it?

A: As a music therapist and mom, I really get this. My family will tell you that it is frequent that I get overstimulated. Often I try using intentional sound to balance chaotic noise, turn on calming instrumental music in the background, or create a quiet spot in your home. Teach your kids to recognize overstimulation too, and narrate it: "My body feels too full right now. I'm going to take five quiet breaths so I can feel better." That is regulation and modeling in action.

Q6: I feel guilty when I need alone time. How do I let go of that?

A: Alone time is not selfish; it is essential. Guilt is often just the echo of old conditioning. Try reframing it: "I am showing my children that rest is allowed. Boundaries are allowed. Recharging is healthy. You don't have to earn your break. You just have to take it." It's been real work for me to shift the conditioned narrative I've held and it is also the reason I wrote the song "I deserve rest". Often I sing that song more for myself than anyone else.

Q7: How do I help my child calm down without saying "calm down"?

A: Great question! Let me preface this by saying each kid is very different. From my experience, saying "Calm down" can actually escalate things. Try inviting regulation with connection: "Let's take a breath together" or "Can I sit with you while you feel this?" You might sing a calming song or mirror their breath rhythm. The goal is co-regulation; calming through connection, not correction. With that being said, sometimes I'll try all of these things and none of them work. In fact, my eldest child actually requests to be alone to calm down. While this goes against my own preferences, it is my job to honor her knowing what she wants for herself.

Q8: Do you ever feel like a hypocrite teaching this stuff but struggling with it yourself?

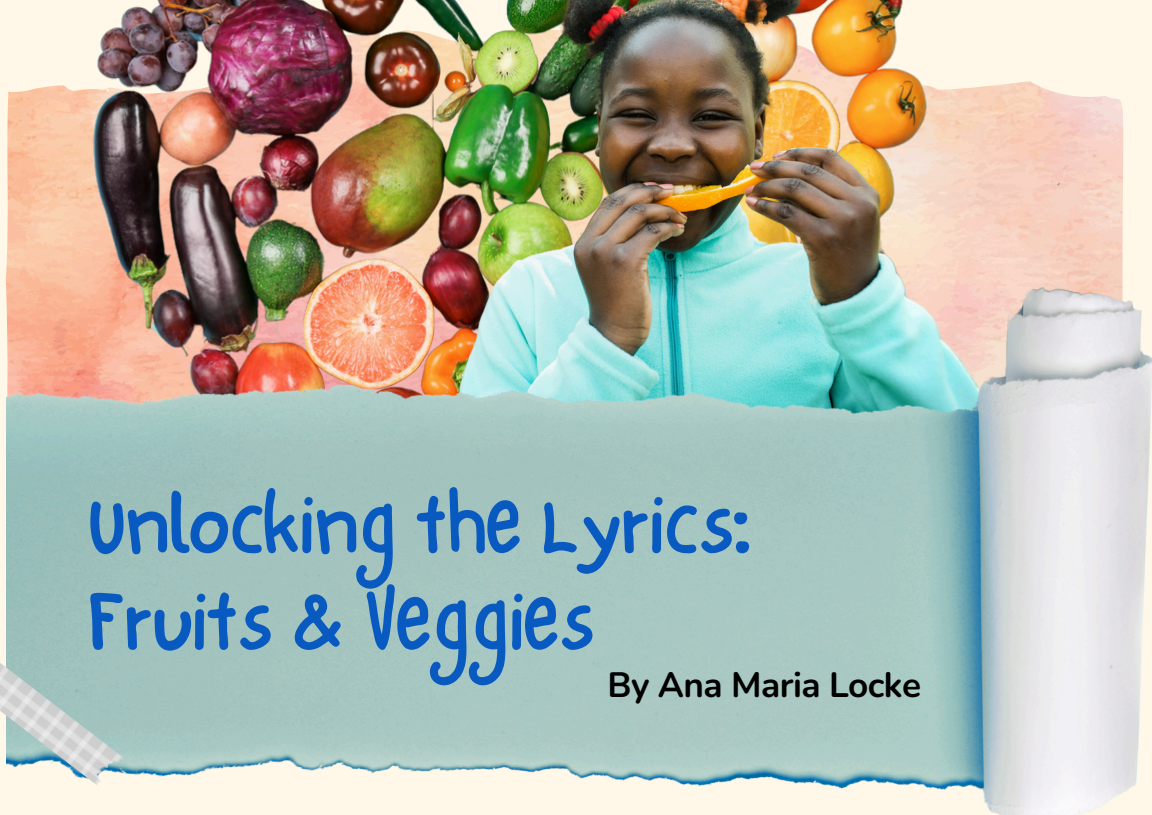
A: Oh, all the time. I often say, "I'm the least perfect person to be writing this magazine. But I believe in sharing what I'm learning while I'm still learning it. This isn't about perfection; it's about presence. About showing our kids that we keep showing up, even when it's hard. That's the best model of resilience there is.

Q9: What do you find most surprising about Mindful Musicians?

A: What has surprised me most is how emphatically loyal all of the families that know about Mindful Musicians are. It legitimately brings me to tears to witness how not only the children, but their entire families are impacted. I feel so deeply sure about this program in my core. I believe full-heartedly in the possibility to help change the brain health viewpoints of the parent generation that is actively raising these beautiful children to have a better love of themselves, more empathy for others, and a better sense of resilience for the struggles that we know life will contain. The best thing, to me, is that these things can be accomplished in super fun, engaging, and creative ways.



We would love to hear your questions! Send Callie an email at callie@mindfulmusicians.org



Unlocking the Lyrics: Fruits & Veggies

By Ana Maria Locke

If you turn anything into a game, a song, or something even a little bit entertaining, we all know you're far more likely to get your child to try it. Luckily, "Fruits and Veggies" is just that—catchy, playful, and designed to open the door to new experiences with food.

This song doesn't just celebrate healthy eating—it also gives you creative, low-pressure ways to help your child explore fruits and vegetables they might not otherwise be willing to try. Even better, it invites you to change the lyrics and make it your own. What does your child like to eat in the morning? At lunch? For snack time? At dinner? Personalizing the song is a great way to help your child feel ownership over their choices and make food exploration more engaging.

The lyrics also gently touch on something bigger: the role that fruits and vegetables play in helping bodies grow strong and stay healthy. These food groups aren't just good for you—they're part of how we take care of ourselves. Self-care isn't just bubble baths and deep breaths—it's also about what we put into our bodies.

It's never too early to start helping children see healthy eating as an act of kindness toward themselves.

One of my favorite lines in the song says, "There are so many different kinds of fruits and vegetables—it's silly to make a fuss!" This line reminds children that they don't have to like everything. What matters is that they feel safe to say no, safe to try again another time, and safe to explore what they do enjoy. When food is framed as fun and non-threatening, even a small "yes" becomes a win.

Whether your child finds a new favorite food, or just gains the confidence to taste something new, "Fruits and Veggies" is about creating a space where discovery feels playful, safe, and entirely theirs.

That's the goal: to turn something that can often feel stressful into something joyful. To sing together, laugh a little, and celebrate even the smallest bite.

FRUITS & VEGGIES

D G
I like bananas in the morning
A D
I like grapes at lunch
D G
I like cuties for snack time
A D (walk up notes A B C#)
I like pears at night

CHORUS

D
Fruits and Vegetables
G A D
Keep me feeling right
D
Green food; water
G A D
Help me sleep at night

D G
I like mushrooms in the morning
A D
I like peas at lunch
D G
I like cucumbers at snacktime
A D (walk up notes A B C#)
I like zucchini at night

CHORUS

 G D
There are lots of other things that I can choose
G D
Spinach leaf, asparagus
G D
Strawberries, raspberries, and radishes
 E G A
It's silly to make a fuss.
Because they're yummy

CHORUS



“Fruits & Veggies”

Materials Needed:

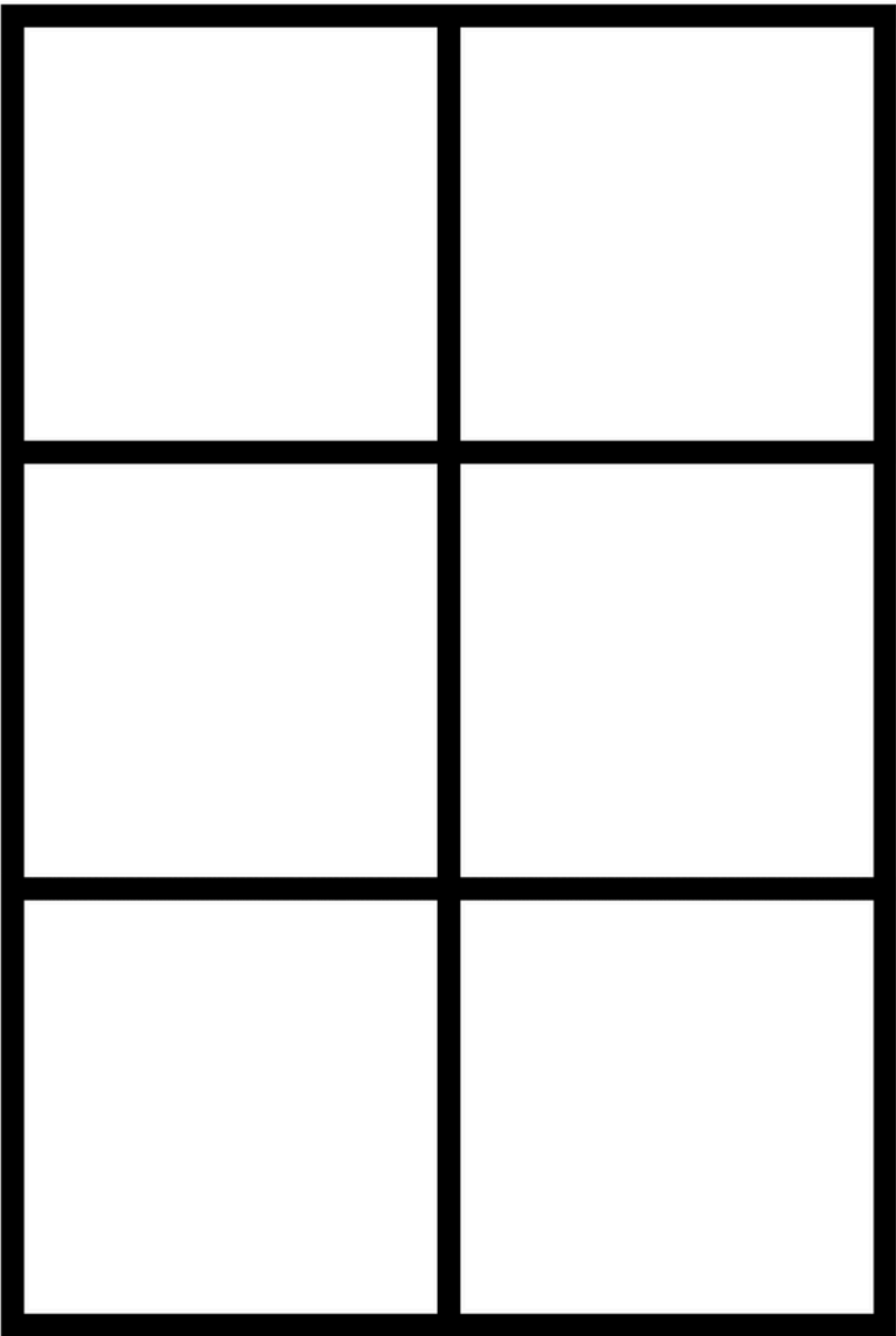
- Print outs
- laminating paper

Description:

This craft encourages children to enjoy fruits and veggies while away from the table. Bonus is that you can choose to work on syllable awareness, or take it a step farther and print double sided and learn about rhythms.

Instruction:

1. You can either choose to print double sided with the rhythm on the back, or choose to only print the fruits and veggies.
2. Your child, if old enough, can cut out each of the squares.
3. If you print on thick enough paper this will be enough, but if not, feel free to laminate the cards.
4. Choose four cards to explore. Place the photo in the boxes in any order.
5. Practice reading from left to right.
6. Then clap the syllables while reading one card at a time.
7. Try clapping and reading all four without stopping.
8. Let them clap and say the food aloud all by themselves.
9. Challenge: clap without saying the food names.
10. Another day you can show them what the music looks like on the back and notice that the sounds remain the same.





Ap-ple



Ap-ri-cot



Pine-ap-ple



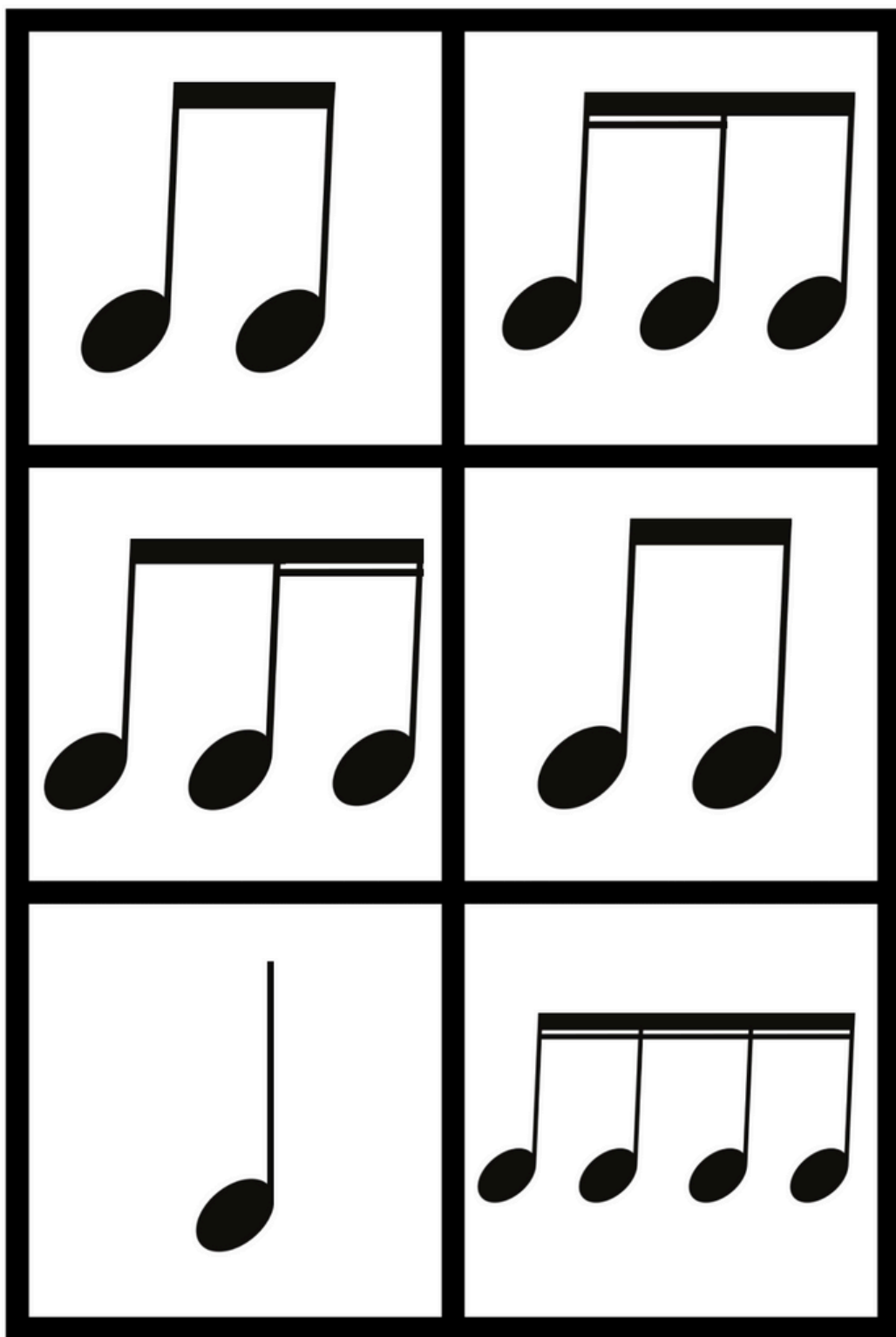
Ki-wi



Plum



Wa-ter-me-lon





Cel-er-y



To-ma-to



Squash



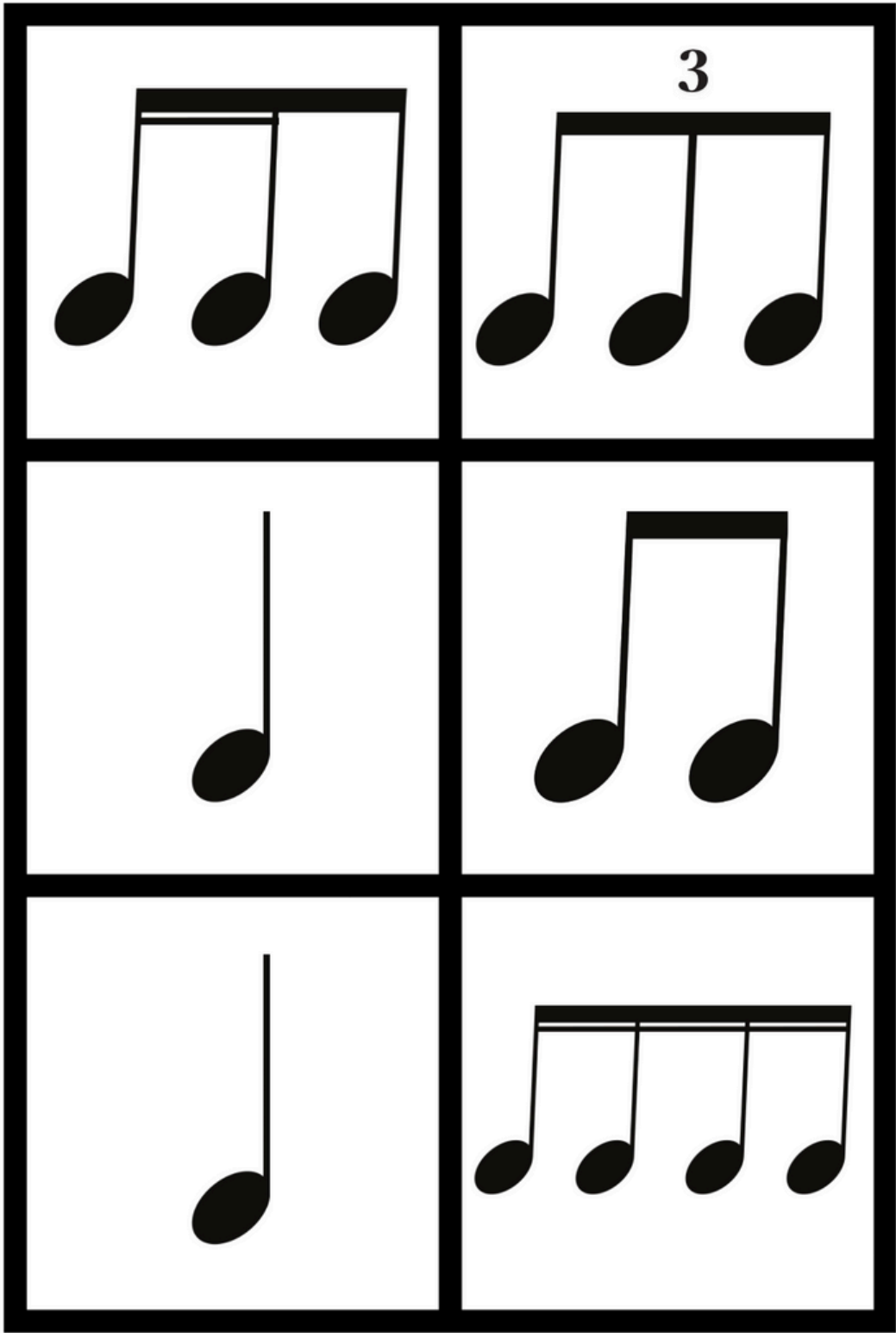
Pump-kin

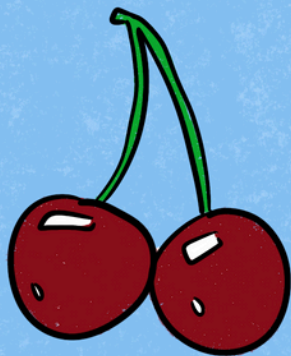


Peas



Cau-li-flow-er

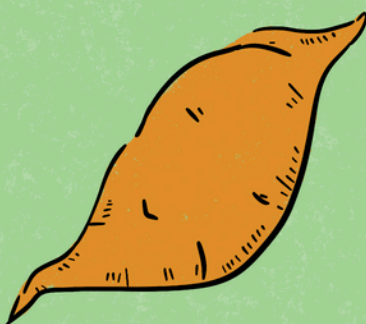




Let's



Try



Something

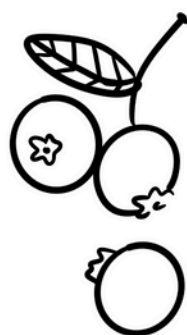


New

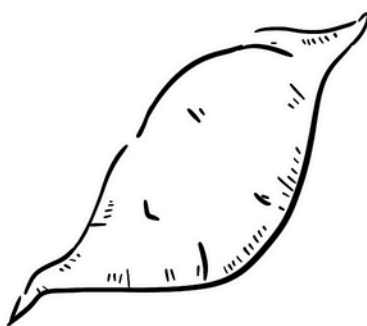
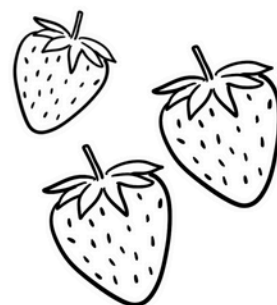




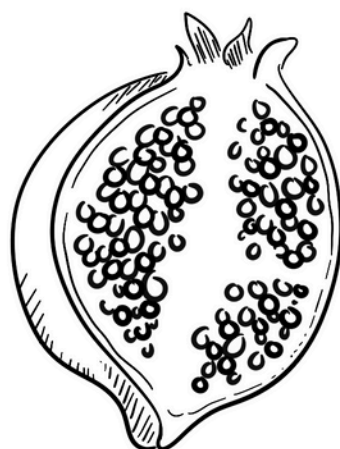
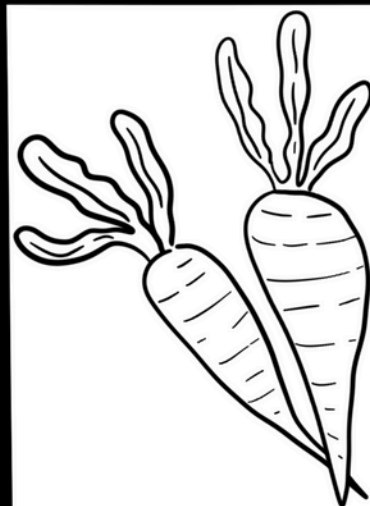
Let's



Try



Something



New



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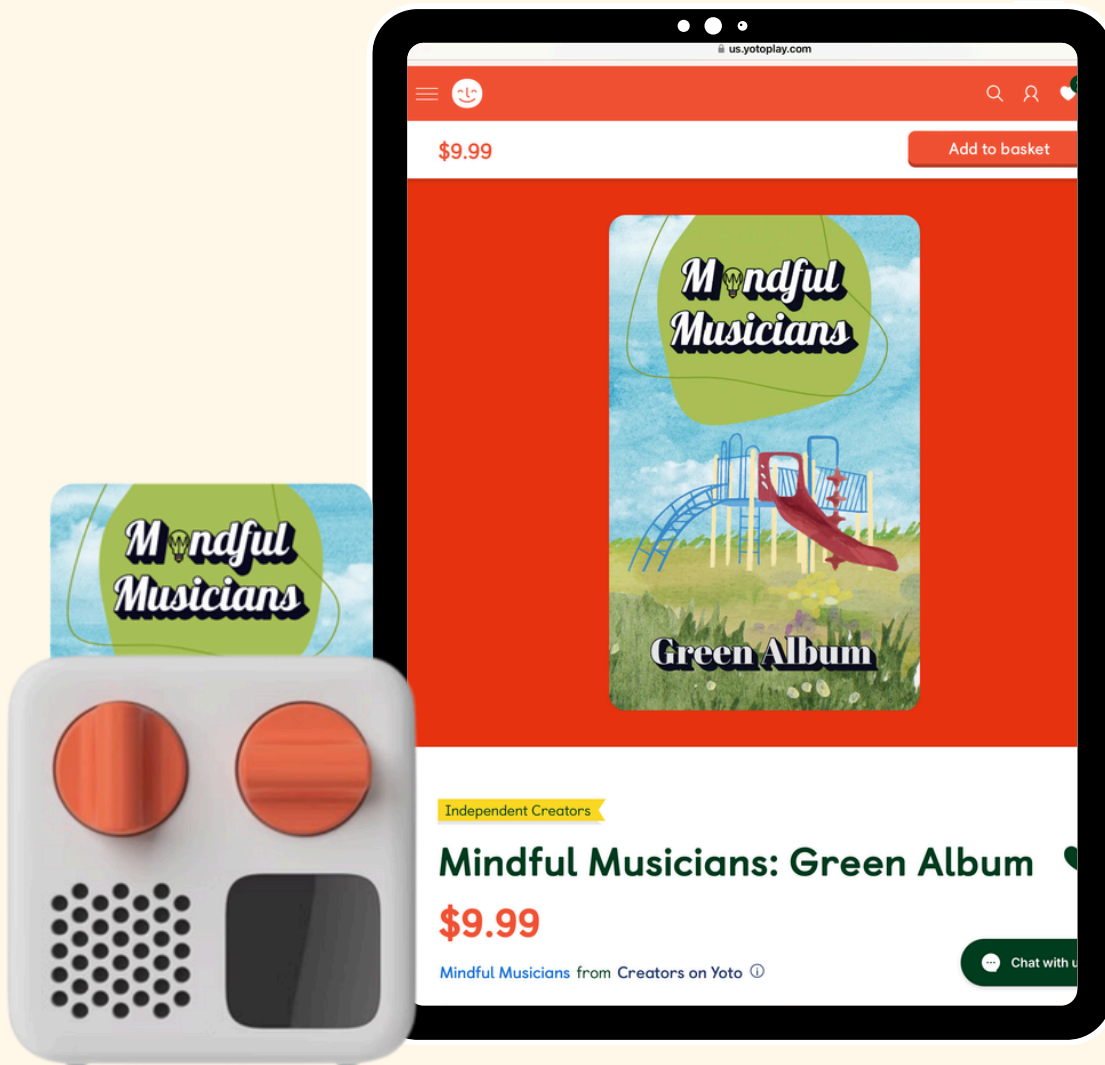


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