

# MINDFUL MUSICIANS

---

SEPTEMBER 2025 — ISSUE 8

---



*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.

"All content in this digital magazine is owned by Mindful Musicians. We kindly ask that you do not share or distribute it beyond your immediate family or students you work with directly. By encouraging others to subscribe themselves, you're supporting our mission and helping us continue to create meaningful content.

Please remember that sharing or distributing this content without permission impacts the ability of Mindful Musicians to produce future resources. Your support ensures we can continue to provide valuable tools for families and educators. Thank you for respecting these guidelines and helping us grow!"

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

2.  
**HELLO FROM CALLIE**



4.  
**SEEK & FIND**

Print in color or black and white. Either way you have a fun activity to learn music symbols, engage curious minds, and work on their concentration!



6.  
**THE MINDS BEHIND  
MINDFUL MUSICIANS**

Ana Maria Locke



8.  
**BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS**

- *Big Feelings*
- *Listening to My Body*



10.  
**POCKET PAUSE**

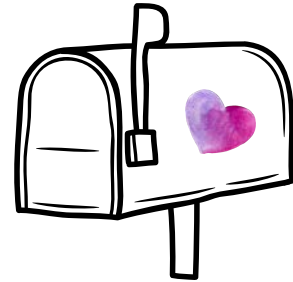
Printable activity for kids to take with them.

A coping skill activity book filled with fun games and relaxation techniques. Just print, take some crayons, and you're set!

13.  
**ASK CALLIE**



15.  
**UNLOCKING THE LYRICS**  
Hear Me



17.  
**CRAFT**

This month's craft invites kids to set personal goals, visualize them through creative art, and celebrate themselves as they work toward achieving them.



18.  
**LUMI THE LIGHTBULB**

Monthly Inspirational Poster







# HELLO, FROM CALLIE

Dear friends,

As September settles in, I find myself noticing the tension between comfort and growth. There's something cozy about this season—the way routines begin to take shape, the way the air carries just a little bite that makes you sit up straighter, a little more awake. I want this forward to feel like that for you: a warm couch and your favorite drink in hand, but with a chill in the air that keeps you from drifting off.

Parenting, I think, is meant to feel a lot like that too.

Lately, I've been reminding myself—sometimes out loud—that this is the season I've been waiting for. Not the "someday" when everything is figured out, not the next milestone, not the calmer future I keep imagining.

This.

Right here.

The messy, magical, exhausting, hilarious, overwhelming, heart-breaking, heart-bursting present moment.

This is the good part.

Of course, not every hour feels good.

There are night wakings that undo me, public sightings where my only “shower” is from a bottle, sticky kisses that live alongside sticky floors, and the impossibility of picturing my babies at 18, or 25, or my own age. But zoomed out, this is the juicy part of life.

The part where we are constantly stretched, humbled, and refined—not just by the role of “parent” but by the gift of being in this symbiotic dance with our kids. They are learning from us, yes, but also teaching us more than we ever expected to learn.

That dance is not always graceful. Sometimes we miss each other, speak past each other, or get tangled in frustration. And yet, as the song “Hear Me” reminds us, “we all have different ways of talking—we all just want to be heard.” What a gift it is to remember that communication, even in its messy forms, is an invitation to empathy. To pause, to listen, to try again. When we meet our kids—and ourselves—there, we’re not just solving misunderstandings; we’re building patience, resilience, and understanding.

There’s another song on the Red Album that puts it so plainly: “No matter where you go, no matter what you do, you’ll always have my heart, ‘cause I belong to you. I love you, not much else to say, I love you.” Every time I hear it, it knocks the wind out of me a little. Because it’s true. For now, we belong to them in a way that is raw and consuming and unrepeatable. And someday, that belonging will shift. But for this season? This is it. This is the treasure.

One of the ways I’ve been trying to stay anchored in that truth is through the sacred space of bedtime. There’s something almost holy about those last moments of the day—the hush, the stillness, the way your voice (yes, your voice—your child’s favorite one, whether you believe you’re a “singer” or not) becomes their safety.

A lullaby is not about pitch or perfection; it’s about heartbeat-to-heartbeat connection. It’s your breath and their breath syncing, your words becoming a blanket that wraps them up and says: you are safe, you are loved, you are mine. Don’t miss that opportunity.

If you’re looking for a place to start, the Silver Album is filled with lullabies designed for exactly this moment. You can find it on Spotify or Apple Music. But the truth is, it doesn’t matter what you sing—just that you do.

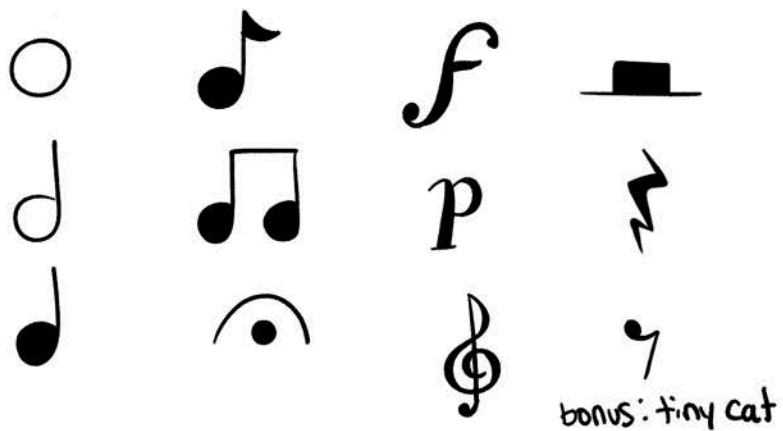
So here’s to this season: the juicy middle, the laughter in the exhaustion, the magic in the mess. May we be awake to it, may we let ourselves belong to it, and may we never forget what a gift it is to belong to them.

With you in the wonder and the chaos,

*Callie Fitzgerald*

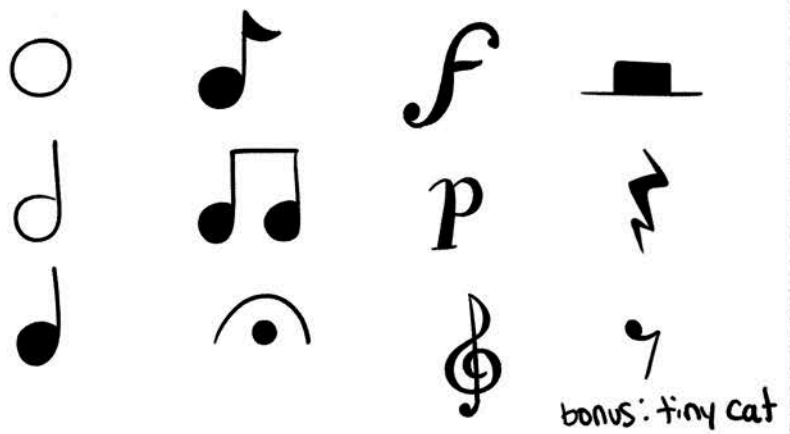


# Hear Me Seek and Find





# Hear Me Seek and Find



# THE MINDS BEHIND MINDFUL MUSICIANS: ANA MARIA LOCKE

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.



**Ana Maria Locke**  
Lyricist, Curriculum Development, & Marketing for  
Mindful Musicians

Interview by Callie FitzGerald

**You are the quiet voice behind so much of what Mindful Musicians has become. When you reflect on your journey here, what moments stand out as shaping the heart of the work we now share?**

It's hard not to get personal because the personal is what fuels the work. Two things come to mind:

First, hearing from kids how much they love things like the “pocket pause”—those moments remind me why we make what we make.

Second, not one event but the everyday—watching Anastasia use the resources I've created. Seeing it land at home makes it feel real and worthwhile.

**In many ways you've been a co-architect of the spirit and soul of Mindful Musicians. What does this community mean to you personally, beyond the work?**

Hope. A sense that someone is on your side. Parenting isn't instinct alone; we mostly know what we were shown. There's shame around “learning” how to parent. I want MM to be a place where parents open the magazine and think, I wish I had this as a kid—at least my child gets it now. We're saying: your struggles are our struggles. More tools mean more love, compassion, and curiosity.

**Your sing-along videos aren't just curriculum—they're moments of connection, joy, and grounding for families. What do you feel when you imagine people on the other side singing along?**

I imagine a “core memory” forming—parents and kids having fun together, dancing around, laughing. Yes, it's good for development, but that's just a crumb of the cookie. It's about being together. Like a cozy karaoke night that turns into something wholesome and memorable.

**So much of what you do is in service of the mission without stepping into the spotlight. How do you stay inspired and nourished behind the scenes?**

Remembering that everyone has a unique child—and yet we share so many of the same struggles. When I hit a hard moment with my daughter and feel like a “bad parent,” I pause and think: Could I make something for this? I try a rhyme, a tool, a little craft. If it helps us, I know it will help someone else someday. I'm both an active participant and a creator; I use the resources I make, and that keeps me inspired.



# THE MINDS BEHIND MINDFUL MUSICIANS: ANA MARIA LOCKE CONTINUED

**There's a rare authenticity and steadiness you bring—felt in meetings and every creative collaboration. Where does that groundedness come from?**

People have called me “sensitive,” and I used to apologize for it. Now I know my foundation is love. Even when someone's upset, I try to see the unmet need—like I would with a child. Listening with genuine interest guides my response. Curiosity helps me show care.

**Many of us see you holding high standards with deep compassion. How do you balance that as a mother—and what's happening behind the scenes that we don't see?**

I made a game for myself: don't react—respond. I pause before speaking, even five seconds, so I can listen for what's really going on. People assume it's natural for me, but it's a practice. Validating my child's hard feelings (“Yeah, waking up is tough,” “School can be hard”) cools my own spark of anger. I still hold the boundary, but the fire goes out when I get on her side.

Behind the scenes? Lots of apologies. I didn't grow up hearing many, so I learned to model them: “You're right, that wasn't fair. I'm sorry. Can I try again?” Doing that with my daughter makes it easier to do with adults—even though that's still harder for me with the people closest to me.

**What's something you've created that people might not notice, but you're deeply proud of?**

I love to incorporate landmarks from Dubuque into the album! The red and green albums nod to Dubuque parks; the silver album was inspired by the Arboretum koi pond. I like hiding details that kids might recognize—“Hey, that looks like our slide!”

**If you had to describe the heart of Mindful Musicians as one person or image, what would it be?**

Baby Ruby. I don't think this would exist without her. When you look at a baby you think, I want hope for you. That feeling is the heart of Mindful Musicians.

**If you could whisper one truth into the ear of every parent, educator, or artist in this work, what would it be?**

Mindful Musicians is water. You don't drink water once a day or only when you're in the desert. These tools we created are meant to be used easily throughout the day; they're nourishment for a growing brain.

**If you could instantly master any random skill—yodeling, tightrope walking, perfect soufflé—what would it be and why?**

Singing like Chappell Roan. There's something explosive and unapologetically big about her stage presence. It's not my personality to be that out-there, but a taste of that freedom would be incredible—like trying on Ruby's shoes for a day.

# FROM PAGES TO PRACTICE

## BY ANA MARIA LOCKE

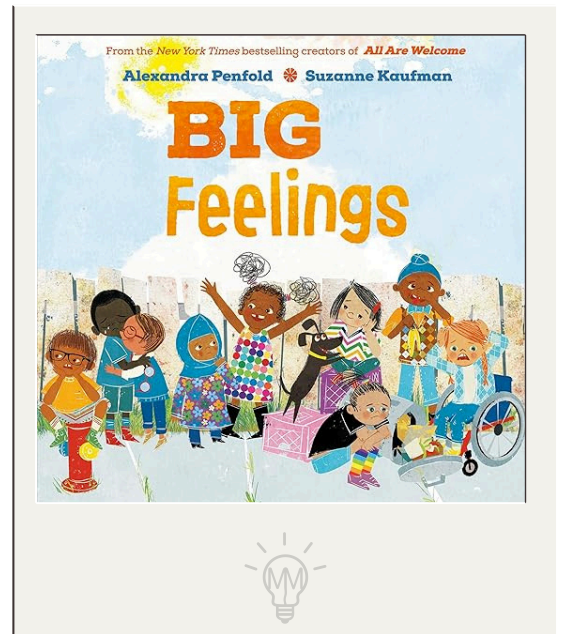
This book review highlights books that parents might already be familiar with, but with a fresh perspective. Each book explores topics we sing about on the Mindful Musicians Green Album, offering new ways to connect music and meaningful lessons with your child

---

*Big Feelings* by Alexandra Penfold & Suzanne Kaufman is a wonderful book to share with young children when you want to encourage communication about emotions.

The illustrations are bright, colorful, and engaging, which keeps little ones' attention while also reflecting a wide range of feelings. The rhyming text makes it especially fun to read aloud, and it offers simple, memorable lines that you can pull out and repeat later as gentle reminders for your child.

This combination of rhythm, visuals, and accessible language makes *Big Feelings* an excellent companion to our song "Hear Me" both a joyful and helpful tools for teaching kids how to talk about what's happening inside.



### Reflection Questions to use with your book:

1. How does your body feel when you are mad? When you are excited?
2. What kinds of things might make you feel that way?
3. What could you do to help yourself calm down if you are mad or feeling "too excited"?
4. What helps you feel extra loved when you are really sad?
5. How could you ask for that thing when you're having a tough time?

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

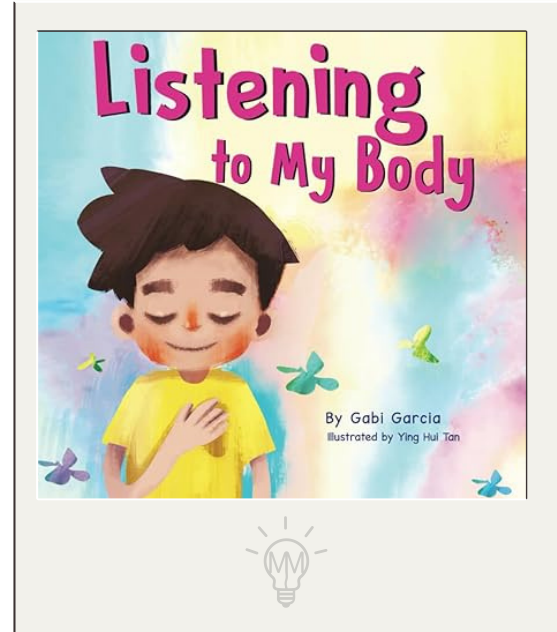


# FROM PAGES TO PRACTICE

## PART 2

*Listening to My Body* by Gabi Garcia is a wonderful choice for older children, or for little ones who enjoy sitting close for a long time while you read together.

This book highlights an essential skill—tuning in to our bodies—and walks readers through different situations while inviting both child and adult to actually practice techniques during the story. This interactive approach makes the reading experience engaging and memorable. It’s also a gentle way to start conversations about calming tools and self-regulation, helping children discover what works best for them before they’re in the middle of a big escalation.

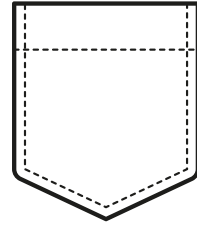


### **Reflection Questions to use with your book:**

1. Which of these calming strategies have you done before?
2. Which ones were your favorites?
3. Why do you think these calming strategies help?
4. Which one would you like to use all day today?
5. When was a time you wished you had used one of these calming tools?
6. How could you remind yourself to try a strategy when you’re starting to feel upset?
7. Which calming strategy would you like to teach or share with a family member?

**Tip\*** Share your favorite technique and make sure they see you using that technique throughout the week!

# 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.

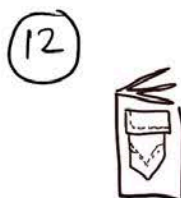
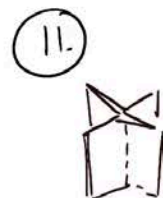
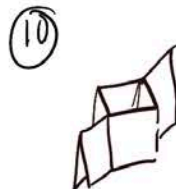
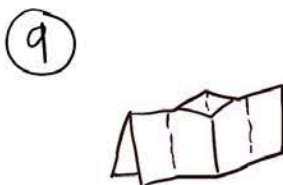
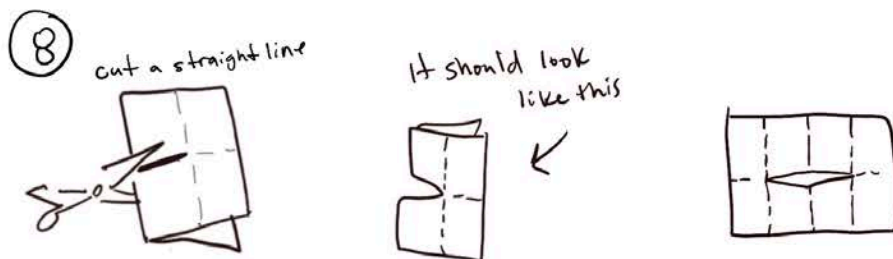
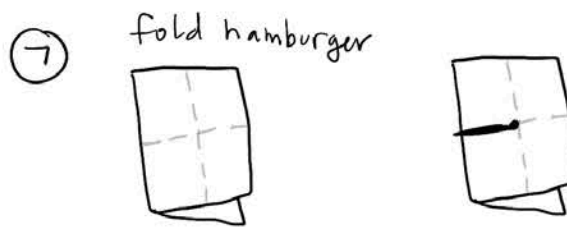
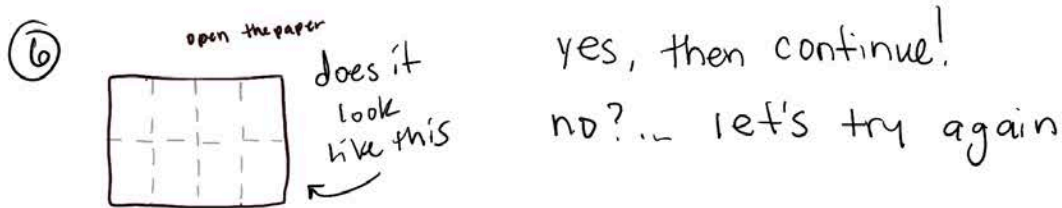
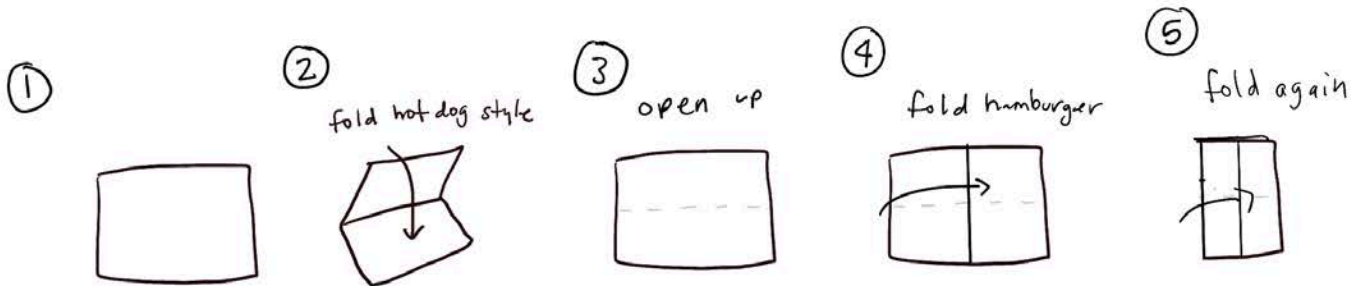
Easy to make and carry, the Pocket Pause empowers kids to practice self-regulation anytime, anywhere.

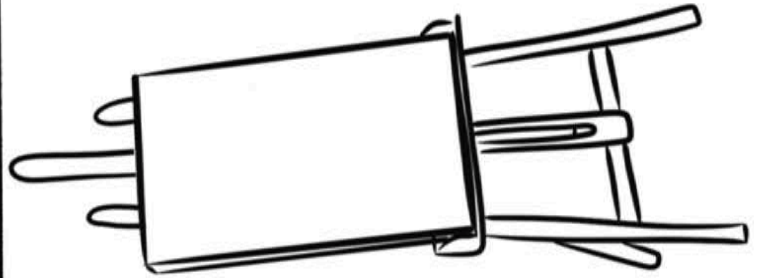
## INSTRUCTIONS

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





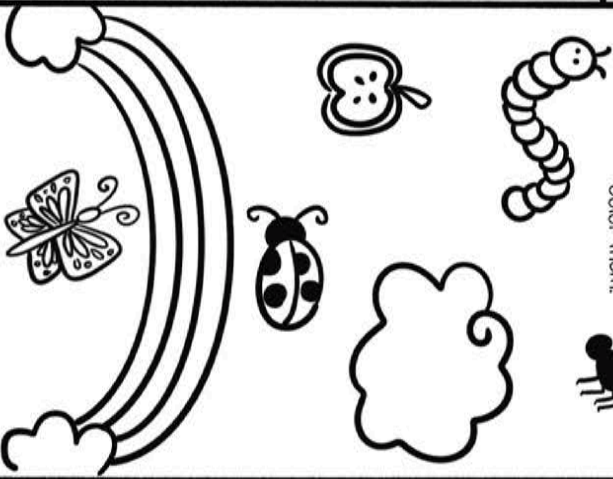
What emotion are you feeling right now? What color is it? What shape is it? What pattern is it? Draw it on the canvas.

Upstairs

Downstairs

Your upstairs brain is your logic and thinking brain. You're downstairs brain is where your emotions live. Draw what you think your characters in each place look like.

Can you clap the number of syllables for each each of the items on this page? Now color them.



Fill this underwater scene with creatures, both real and imaginary — maybe even a submarine or an underwater palace!



8

Can you find these words:

Patient Honest Strong Kind  
Creative Enough Brave Smart

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





# 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: You've written before about savoring "the messy middle" of parenting. What's one recent messy moment that surprised you with joy (or taught you something new)?**

I was pleasantly surprised after a frustrating moment when my daughter was experiencing GIANT emotions. I took a beat and thought about how I wanted to handle it. Instead of talking at all, I just started tapping—like in the song Tappa—and modeling breathing. This, of course, made her mad at first, but I kept going. Then I started singing along with the tapping. Then my husband joined me. Finally, I told her we could move on faster if/when she started tapping with us. And it worked! This is a very determined child, so if it worked with her, I'd suggest trying it at home too.

## **Q2: In the song Hear Me, the message is about being understood. How do you practice that in your own home—especially when communication feels hard?**

I model using my own voice by stopping a conversation and simply saying, "I'm not feeling heard." With my daughter, when harder moments come up, I make sure to get down on her level, listen with full attention, and then ask if there's anything else she wants to add. I ask this twice before I respond, and it's like magic. So much angst is released when we're given space to feel heard—whether or not the outcome goes in our favor. She didn't get what she wanted in this particular situation, but because she felt heard, she handled it so much better.

## **Q3: If you could go back and tell "new mom Callie" one piece of wisdom you've learned through experience, what would it be?**

"You're about to bend in ways you couldn't even imagine. But don't worry—you're bendy. You won't break."

## **Q4: What's a common parenting myth you'd love to bust once and for all?**

That "because I said so" is a reason for obedience. Also, the idea that respect is earned through fear. If respect only exists because a child is scared or threatened not to give it, that's not real respect—that's compliance. It's a generational thing, deeply conditioned, and something I'm working very hard to break in my own parenting.

## **Q5: Mindful Musicians is all about building lifelong brain health skills. What's one skill you see as most overlooked—but most powerful?**

Pausing. Honestly, it still surprises me how effective and efficient it is. Throughout the day, I remind myself to just stop for a moment. It's free. It's quick. And even thirty seconds of intentional pause can ground me again.

# Ask Callie continued

## Q6: How has your own relationship with music changed since becoming a parent?

Ha! I feel like I don't even know music anymore—I only hear what's boppin' in the kid world. But seriously, I've become much more attuned to lyrics. I notice the stories songs are telling, and I'm more sensitive to them too. Even what we hear subconsciously can have a big impact. That's why I've become a big fan of instrumental music these days—it gives me a way to lower sensory stimulation when I'm already overloaded.

## Q7: What's a small ritual (musical or mindful) that grounds you as the seasons shift?

Stretching to calm music first thing in the morning. Even five minutes on my yoga mat makes a huge difference. It helps me feel grounded before the chaos begins.

## Q8: Parents often say they feel like they're "failing." What do you do on the days you feel that way?

I cry. A lot. And then I talk to my husband and a couple of close friends. I let myself feel pitiful for a bit. Then I sleep, and I remind myself that tomorrow can look completely different. I also remind myself that I'm the only mom my kids have, and that I have to keep showing up for them. It's not about me—it's about them.

## Q9: Looking ahead: what's exciting you most about the future of Mindful Musicians?

I can't wait for the world to truly get how important—and simultaneously fun—this can be. It's going to be a game-changer for families everywhere.

## Q10: What's a song your kids have on repeat right now that makes you secretly smile (or cringe)?

Secretly cringe? Definitely the K-Pop Demon Hunters soundtrack. I know, I know—people love it. I just haven't moved into that stage yet. But don't worry, it's possible—because the obsession (especially with Zoey) is very, very real.



We would love to hear your questions! Send Callie an email at [callie@mindfulmusicians.org](mailto:callie@mindfulmusicians.org)





# UNLOCKING THE LYRICS: HEAR ME

By Ana Maria Locke



One thing I really appreciate about the song “Hear Me” is how true it feels—not just for children, but also for adults. As we send our kids back to school, it’s a powerful reminder that children need to be heard. Often, they are communicating their needs without words, and it’s our job to be attentive, present, and tuned in.

Children are not always capable of articulating what they need. When they come home after a long school day, what they may crave most is connection and grounding—not a barrage of questions about academics. Instead of asking, “Did you learn enough today?” try questions that spark joy: What’s something you drew that you’re proud of? Who is someone you were kind to today?

A simple tool like “fist to five” can also help check in with your child. A fist means it was the worst day possible and they may need extra support, while five means it was the best day ever. Meeting your child where they are builds communication skills gradually. For example, if they’re at a “three,” you might offer snacks, calm drawing time, or quiet connection—rather than immediately turning on a screen. Over time, they’ll learn to recognize and remember what helps them reset.

---

“Hear Me” is also an invitation to ask yourself: Do I like the way I am communicating with my child? One powerful shift for me was moving away from punishments toward clear, consistent communication of boundaries. Instead of vague warnings or endless “one more chances,” I began practicing an If \_\_, then I will \_\_ approach. This made expectations predictable, took away much of the guilt, and reframed discipline as teaching rather than punishing. For example, if my child is screaming and running around the house, I get down on her level, hold her hands, and say:

*“I see you’re having so much fun! You can either go outside to get your big screams and runs out, or you can have calm feet and a calm voice inside. If you cannot do this, then we will sit down together for a meditation to help your body calm down.”*

If she explodes with anger I stay steady:

*“You can walk or be carried to a safe place to feel those feelings.”*

We’ll sit in her room with dim lights, maybe use a meditation card or square breathing, and I offer a hug when her hands are safe. She may scream, she may be upset—but I stay consistent. Over time, she learned that I follow through every single time. The boundary was clear, the communication was simple, and she felt secure knowing what to expect.

This practice reminded me that children need to hear us just as much as we need to hear them. Clear, consistent, compassionate communication is what helps them understand boundaries—and eventually set their own.

---

As adults, we sometimes struggle to express our own needs, too. Society often pressures us to be perfect communicators and endlessly patient parents. But real growth happens when we show our humanity. Practicing self-regulation out loud can be powerful: I feel dysregulated, so I’m going to take some deep breaths. Or, I need a five-minute break for tea. When children see us taking care of ourselves, they learn that emotions are normal and manageable. Ask yourself: Do you bottle everything up until you explode? Do you only present the perfect, polished version of yourself? Do you apologize when needed and say “please” to your child? For me, parenting shifted when I started thinking of it like an equation:

- 80% modeling
- 10% boundary setting
- 10% holding those boundaries

This balance reminds me that my actions often speak louder than my words.

---

At the end of the day, you are not just a parent—you are a human being raising another human. Your feelings matter. Showing your child how a well-rounded adult navigates difficulty is one of the most valuable lessons you can offer.

# HEAR ME

A  
I hear a little kitty meowin'  
E A  
I know that I can make that sound  
A  
I hear a little puppy barkin'  
E A  
I know that I can make that sound

D  
Wah wah wah wah  
A  
Breathe breathe breathe breathe  
D  
Wah wah wah wah  
A  
Breathe breathe breathe breathe

D  
Meow meow meow meow  
A  
Bark bark bark bark  
D  
Meow meow meow meow  
E  
Bark bark bark bark

A  
We all have different ways of talking  
E A  
and we all just want to be heard  
E A  
and we all just want to be heard

A  
We all have different ways of talkin'  
E A  
We all just want to be heard  
A  
I hear a little baby cryin'  
E A  
and I know that I can make that sound  
A  
I hear myself whinin'  
E A  
I know that I can calm me down





# “Hear Me” Mailbox

## Materials Needed:

- 1 shoebox or tissue box (with an opening for mail)
- Construction paper (various colors)
- Scissors
- Tape or glue
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Stickers, washi tape, or other decorative items (optional)
- Small slips of paper or index cards
- Pencils/ Pens

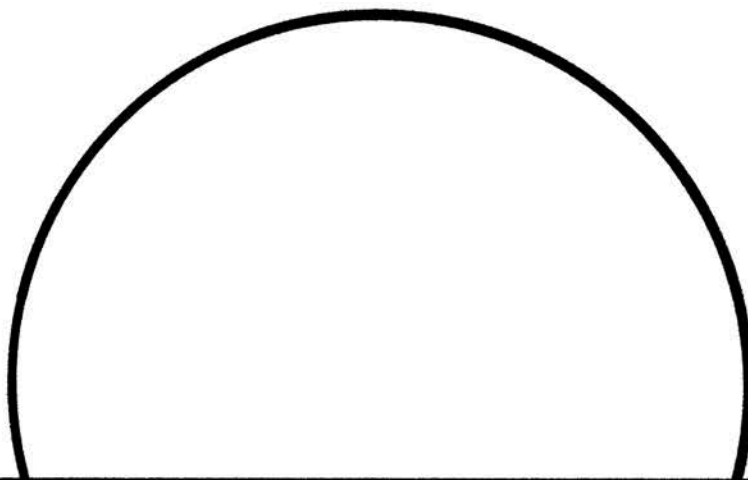
## Description:

The Hear Me Mailbox gives children a safe and creative way to share their thoughts and feelings—through notes, drawings, or symbols—so they know their voice is heard.

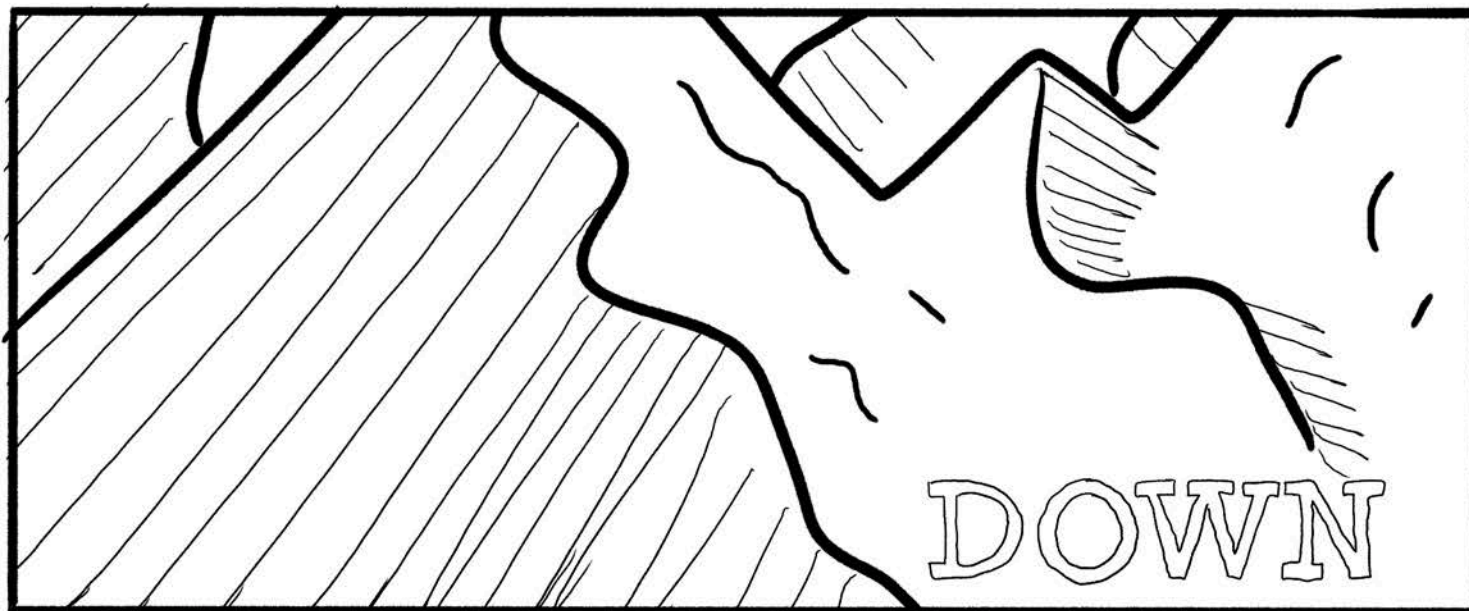
## Instructions:

1. Prepare the Mailbox: Cut a slot in a shoebox lid or use a tissue box opening.
2. Decorate: Decorate your mailbox any way you like!
3. Make the Mail: Cut slips of paper or use index cards, and keep them nearby with pencils or pens.
4. Explain How to Use It: Tell children they can drop in anything they want to share—words, doodles, or feelings.
5. Practice Together: Model by writing a note or drawing and placing it inside.
6. Follow Through: Open the mailbox daily and respond with care, showing that what’s inside truly matters.

I CAN



CALM IT



DOWN

I CAN



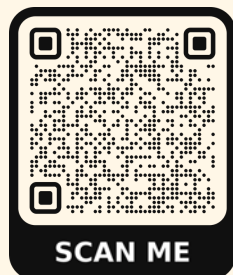
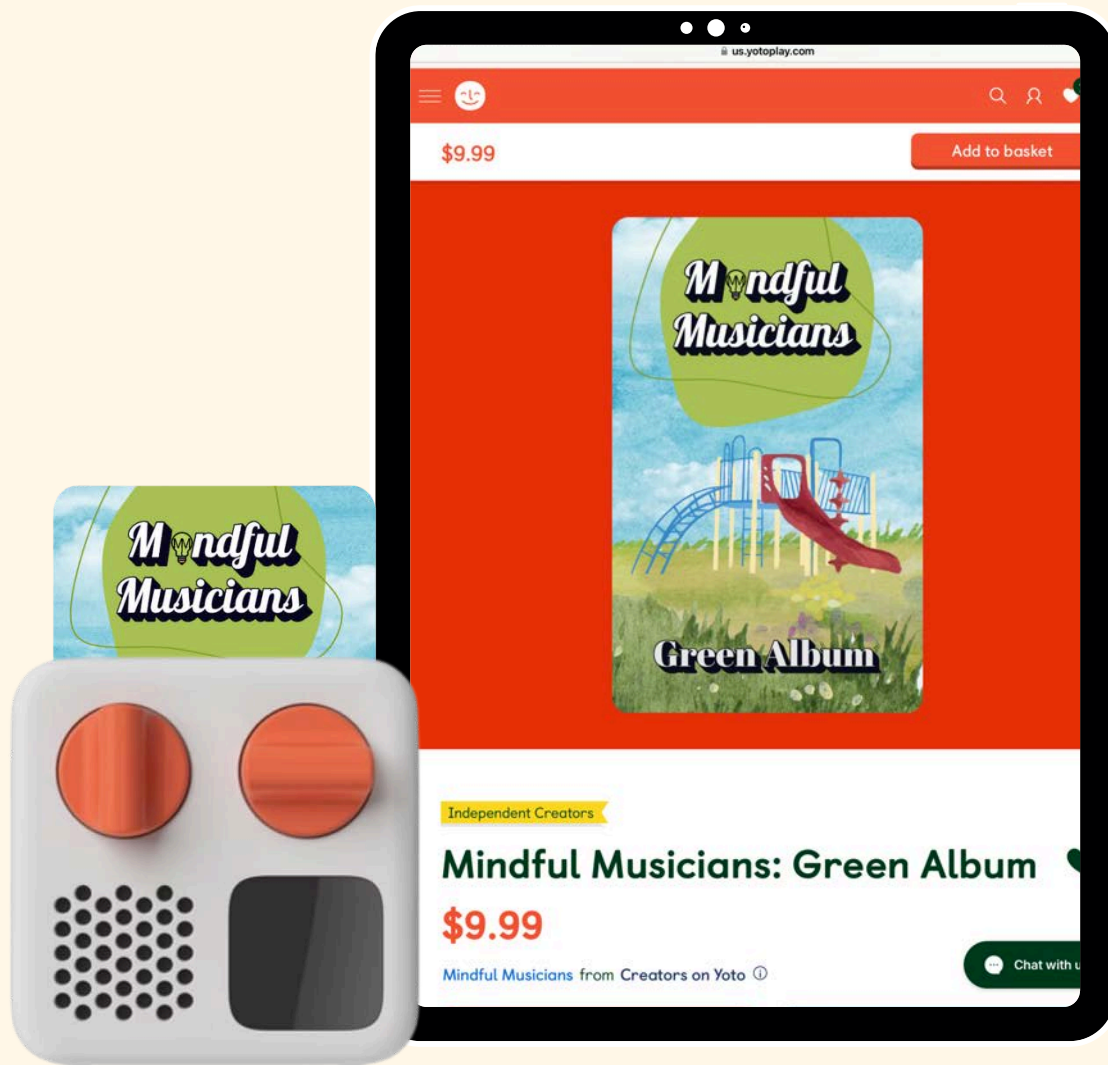
CALM IT

DOWN



# FIND US ON YOTO

provide an easy, screen-free way to incorporate music and mindfulness into your children's daily routine.



UNLOCK MINDFUL MUSIC

<https://us.yotoplay.com/products/mindful-musicians-green-album>