

# Peace of Mind

At Lafayette Elementary School in Washington, D.C.  
5701 Broad Branch Road, NW  
[www.teachpeaceofmind.com](http://www.teachpeaceofmind.com)

## Showcasing Classrooms



Irene Taguian leads a Mindful Moment with her Pre-K Class

Several classroom teachers regularly use Mindful Moments with their students during the week. They report that it helps to settle kids down after transitions, provide some much-needed downtime, and helps students manage their feelings and bodies. Kudos to these classrooms!

You can always read more about Peace of Mind, join our mailing list, and find out about current events at our website: [www.teachpeaceofmind.com](http://www.teachpeaceofmind.com). You can also follow us on Facebook. Contact Linda at [Linda.Ryden@dc.gov](mailto:Linda.Ryden@dc.gov) or Jillian at [Jillian.Diesner@dc.gov](mailto:Jillian.Diesner@dc.gov)



**Let us know...** We would love to know if you are reading our newsletter or if there is another way that we could be communicating with you about Peace of Mind. Please shoot us a quick email just letting us know if you are reading this. Thanks!!!

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## Upcoming Events:

### April 6 HSA General Meeting & Peace of Mind Discussion

Linda and Jillian will be at the April 6 HSA meeting to talk about the brain science we've been learning in Peace Class. We will relate the brain science to behavioral issues that you might be dealing with at home. Please come with your questions and learn more about your Amygdala, Hippocampus, and Prefrontal Cortex!

## Recommended Watch



Why Be Kind?



### Mindfulness Practice

**Practicing Mindfulness at Home-** I'm hearing from more and more of my students in grades 1-5 that they are using their mindfulness skills at home, in sports, to help them fall asleep, etc. This is so heartening since mindfulness skills are life skills that will serve them for the rest of their lives. One thing that research has shown is that dosage matters. Doing mindfulness in Peace Class once a week is great and is more than most children do. But to really get more of the benefits daily practice is key. Just like with piano lessons or soccer, the more you practice the more fun you have and the better equipped you are to handle the challenges. There are lots of ways for kids and families to practice mindfulness at home. Here are some of my favorites:

**Smiling Mind:** Smiling Mind is a free mindfulness website and app from Australia. It is geared to kids and is set-up to use in a fun and interactive way. Check it out at [www.smilingmind.com.au](http://www.smilingmind.com.au).

**Mind Yeti:** Mind Yeti is another free mindfulness website and app. It has fun mindfulness exercises to help with focus, listening, relaxation, and sleep. Check it out at [www.mindyeti.com](http://www.mindyeti.com)

**Calm:** Calm is an app and website intended mostly for adults but I've found that many of my older students really enjoy it. One of its unusual features are beautiful calming scenes - like waves gently rolling onto a beach with the accompanying sounds. Children really love these scenes and just having them on in my classroom provides a gentle relaxing atmosphere. Calm features mindfulness sessions that you can tailor by time and topic. The app and website are free but for an extra small fee you can unlock a section designed for children that includes some wonderful Sleep Stories. This app has been very popular with my students who practice at home.



### Social and Emotional Learning

In Pre-K and Kindergarten, we have been revisiting the Feelings Thermometer and practicing ways to calm down before we go to a "Level 5" (aka, meltdown or temper tantrum.) We have named many ways to calm down, including belly breathing, thinking about something else, counting, and telling someone how we feel. In some classes we watched Cookie Monster try to control himself and stay calm using various strategies in the [video Star S'Mores](#).



### Ask Your Child:

**PK-K:** What is the Feelings Thermometer? How can you calm down and avoid "flipping your lid?"

**Grade 1:** What is the Conflict Escalator?

**Grade 2:** What part of your brain is in charge when you are going up the Conflict Escalator?

**Grade 3:** What is at the top of the Conflict Escalator?

**Grades 4 and 5:** What is the Conflict CAT?

In 1st - 5th grade we are starting our Conflict Resolution Unit. In 1st and 2nd grade we are learning about what conflict means and learning about the Conflict Escalator. The Conflict Escalator is a visual way to help kids understand how small conflicts can get bigger or escalate because of the things that people say or do. We're relating this to the brain science we've learned so that we can understand the roles of our amygdala and prefrontal cortex in escalating conflicts. We are mostly learning through acting out stories about friends who have conflicts.

In the older grades we are revisiting and building upon the concepts that we learned last year. Through skits, role-playing, and stories we are applying the Conflict Escalator and Conflict CAT concepts to real-life situations. I'll share more about the Conflict CAT next time.



### Creating a Kinder and More Inclusive School

**Buddy Benches** Now that our new playgrounds are finally finished we have unveiled something we've been waiting to do for two years. On each of the playgrounds we have installed special Buddy Benches. These are blue and yellow benches with the words Buddy Bench carved into them. Buddy Benches are intended to help children who are feeling sad, lonely or left-out at recess. If a child doesn't have anyone to play with they can go and sit on the Buddy Bench. When other children see someone sitting on the Buddy Bench we are encouraging them to go over and ask them to join their game. We are still working out getting out the message about these but there is lots of evidence that these benches can be very helpful with social issues at recess.



Buddy Benches and Peace Club Buddies