



Hug the Monkey

Why we like it: When we teach kids how to self-soothe, they have a tool to help themselves in times of need. This fun exercise engages students to connect with their feelings and learn how to help themselves or ask for help from a trusting adult.

Duration: 30 minutes

Materials: Monkey puppet or other stuffed animal, mindful coloring sheet, gel pens, or other writing materials special for mindful coloring,

FocusedKids Lesson Video: [Hug the Monkey](#)

Lesson Activities: Mindful Coloring and brain break

VOCABULARY

Feeling words (show or make ahead of time a feelings chart)

Use Guard Dog feeling chart

MAKE IT A HABIT

Have a monkey or other stuffed animal in the calm down basket for students to hold and hug when they are needing to feel better. This is a great tool for kids who come in sad to school, or who come in from recess sad. Encourage the phrase, "Hug the monkey when you need to feel better."

PRACTICE IT

During circle time, pass around the monkey or other stuffed animal or puppet. While one student is hugging the stuffed animal, the rest of the class is giving themselves a hug. Give each student a chance to take one deep breath before passing on the stuffed animal.

Make a list of people or pets they can give or get a hug from when they are feeling sad or lonely.

SEND IT HOME

Encourage students to do this exercise at home. All they need is a favorite stuffed animal. You could also create your own note to parents attached to each mindful coloring. This will help integrate the learning at home.

CORE LESSON

Opening Brain Break

Begin by introducing the chime if you have not already. Start off with the chime. Hands-on belly or another anchor spot (heart, lap, knees). Listen to the chime consecutively from one time to three times depending on the student's needs for getting regulated. See [Chime lesson video demonstration](#). Use this short time to help students get their brains and bodies ready for learning. "Before we can learn about our brain, we have to get our brain ready." A great phrase to teach the class, "When we





	listen to the chime, we are calm and focused.” Teach this by you, the teacher, saying it first and then have the students repeat.
What to Say	Introduce the monkey to your class, and explain that we all have an “inner monkey.” “I feel bad when you are hurt or sad.” “I live right next to your heart, and what makes me feel better is a hug.” Share with the kids a time when you felt hurt or sad. Then have the children talk about a time when they felt that way, or if someone is having a tough time right now. Ask what helped them feel better. Invite kids to either hug the monkey puppet or hug themselves and their inner monkey together. They also can ask for a hug from someone important to them. Ask if anyone needs to hug the monkey at this point. Take turns hugging.
Lesson Activity	Read Grumpy Monkey Mindful Coloring- Hug the Monkey
Closing Gratitude	Create a closing routine with your class around gratitude. We know that when children practice thinking about what they are grateful for, it makes their brains happier, calmer, and less stressed. See the gratitude section for more ideas or to expand on what we provide. Gratitude for Students

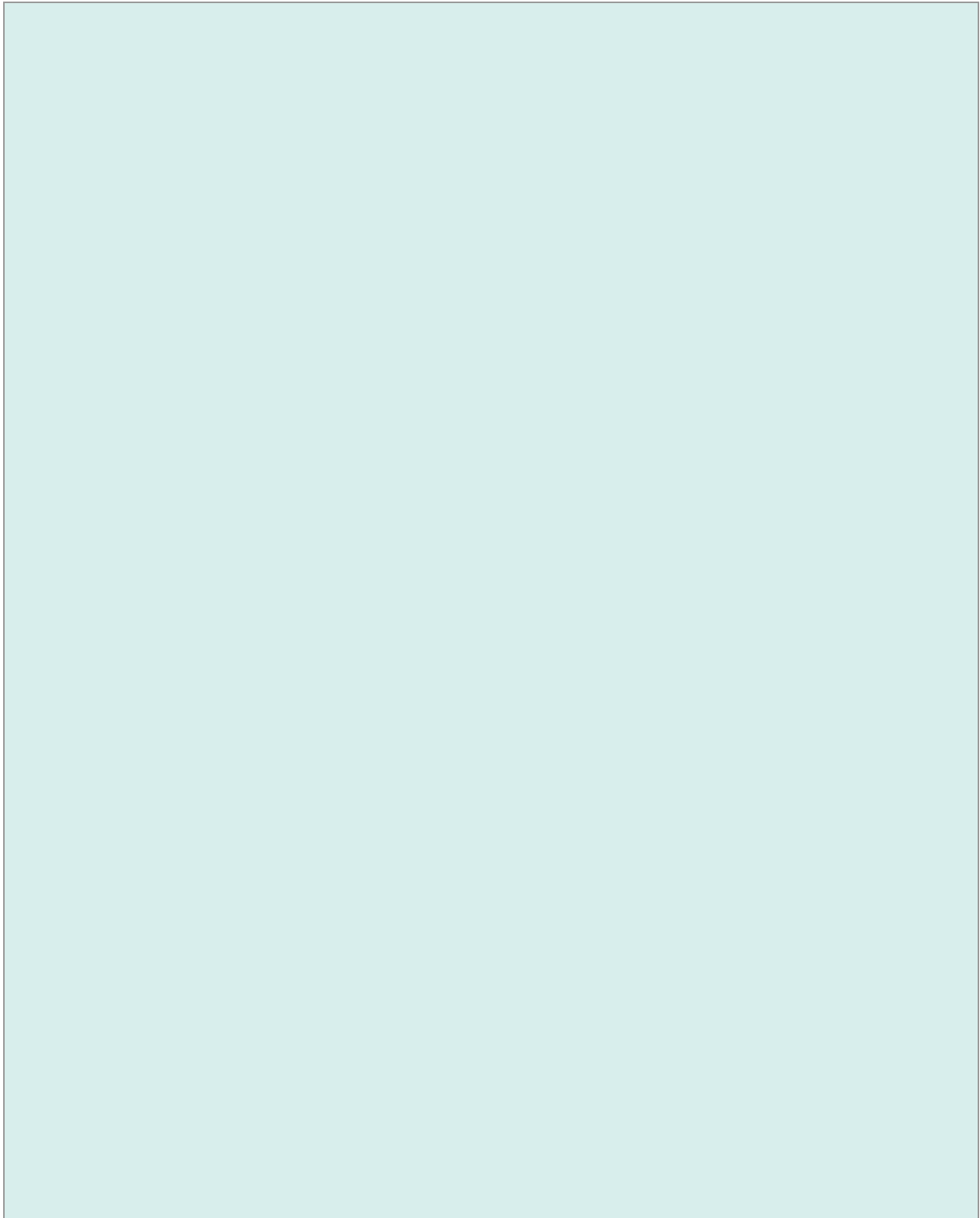
LESSON EXTENSIONS

Brain Science	<input type="checkbox"/> A hug causes the brain to release its “feel good” chemicals into our bodies. They physically help us feel better. It’s reported that our brain needs 10 hugs a day to feel happy! Practice hugging every day, throughout the day.
Books	<input type="checkbox"/> Grumpy Monkey
Additional Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> https://momentousinstitute.org/blog/search/results?q=Hug+the+Monkey





MAKE IT YOUR OWN!



FocusedKids™ Core Lesson

Grade Prek-2, Core Lesson Hug the Monkey



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