



Western
Centre for School
Mental Health



**LONDON DISTRICT
Catholic School
BOARD**

MINDUP

Findings from the
2016-2017 Pilot of
MindUP in LDCSB
Kindergarten
Classes

MINDUP FOR YOUNG CHILDREN LDCSB PILOT YEAR

Dear Parent,

Greetings from Western University's Centre for School Mental Health and the London District Catholic School Board Mental Health and Research teams. We are pleased to share with you the positive and encouraging early results from the first year of the MindUP for Young Children Research Project. This past school year (2016-2017), your child's kindergarten classroom educators taught MindUP curriculum and completed surveys to measure the effects of MindUP.

This summary report will:



Mindful seeing in the garden



Mindful seeing

- Describe the MindUP for Young Children project and curriculum
- Present a snapshot of the results gathered so far
- Explain MindUP for Young Children project plans moving forward

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15 CLASSROOMS LDCSB SCHOOLS 8

15
TEACHERS

9
EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATORS

246
STUDENTS

Educators filled out surveys for children whose parents provided consent for them to be a part of the study. Individual students were not identified and all results are presented in a collective. These surveys rated children's social-emotional and learning skills. Data are currently being analyzed. Teachers provided information about the classroom in general and their observations of the program.

The MindUP curriculum contains 15 teacher-led lessons that focus on Social-Emotional Learning by linking brain science, positive psychology, and mindful awareness. MindUP meets Ontario Ministry of Education Directives and aligns with the core principles and learning goals of LDCSB.

“To me, mindful awareness means being present to others, present to God... it is the first step to understanding that our blessings come from God.”
- Joe Bezzina

All educators felt that the MindUP program matched the school board's priorities and objectives (Somewhat 33% and Very Much 67%). All principals surveyed indicated they think MindUP aligns with the school improvement plans and board goals. One Teacher and Early Childhood Educator taught MindUP along with Religion because they felt the concepts were complementary. Furthermore, they brought the MindUP language to the daily prayer, encouraging the children to **"mindfully pray."**

MindUP also had benefits for educators. Utilizing MindUP in the classroom has been reported to improve the classroom climate, increase teacher's patience with students, and improve their communication with students, parents, and other staff.

Feedback from educators on the changes they noticed in their classrooms as a result of the MindUP program is entirely positive. The impacts on the children that they described are summarized below:

Calming Strategies

Children are more easily calmed; the classroom is a calmer environment

Kindness & Gratitude

Children are performing and recognizing acts of kindness and expressing gratitude

Brain Language

Children are aware of how their brain works and love using brain vocabulary

Focus & Attention

Children are better able to focus on learning

Emotions

Children have more control of their emotions; awareness and naming their emotions



Extending the lesson: Teacher using Christmas garland as a visual to teach about the nervous system.

“ I feel I am more mindful and aware of student's emotional states and able to relate behaviours back to the brain more often. I am much calmer in my approach to teaching and am able to help students calm down when they are upset without getting frustrated.”

– LDCSB Teacher



Educators were asked the extent to which they thought children learned about controlling their negative emotions (emotional self-regulation); the connection between their brains and their emotions; and using mindful awareness and breathing to focus their attention. For each question, **100%** of respondents indicated the children learned these important concepts and skills.

“My students became very good at **focusing** - especially with the breathing ball. Many times they would ask for the calming music we played at snack time. They became very good at recognizing and naming their **feelings** when upset and then breathing to **calm down**. They also became very good at **perspective taking** and **choosing happy**.”
– LDCSB Teacher

“One little JK, who was actually probably three at the time, was doing something at home... his dad was trying to build a tower and [Student] thought it wouldn't work. And he said to his dad, “Dad you need to stop. You're thinking with your **amygdala** you need to slow down and calm down and think with your **prefrontal cortex**!”
– LDCSB Teacher

We are **grateful** to the parents and educators who participated in this research.

Moving forward, LDCSB will continue to implement MindUP in early learning classrooms. The research study is funded for the next 4 years. Please expect to hear from us again near the beginning of the school year with an invitation to participate in the research again. We plan to scale up the study by adding more kindergarten classrooms and some Grade 1 classrooms to the research project. All new classrooms will receive the teacher training, MindUP curriculum and resources, and support. In the future we are planning to implement MindUP and continue the research with the students from this past school year all the way into grades 2/3. We are studying the benefits for children receiving MindUP throughout their early childhood education.



Western
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1137 Western Road, Room 1154
Faculty of Education Building
Western University
London, Ontario, Canada N6G 1G7



www.csmh.uwo.ca



519-661-2111 x 82627



csmh@uwo.ca



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Sandra Savage
LDCSB Mental Health Lead
Email: ssavage@ldcsb.ca
Phone: 519-663-2088
x 42105