

Why Do Early Years' Teachers Teach Mindfulness?

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Abstract

Creating personal mindfulness practices can transform the way we respond to stress, engage in our roles at work, and how we view and approach the uncomfortable and inconvenient aspects of life. Mindfulness practices can be embedded into a person's lifestyle and become a way of life for them. For teachers, a personal mindfulness practice can also be transferred into the classroom, potentially impacting those around them, including the children they teach. Emerging research has illustrated many benefits of integrating mindfulness approaches and skills for both teachers and students. The aim of the study was to investigate whether early years' teachers have their own personal mindfulness practices and, if so, how (or if) these practices translate into their professional lives and into the classrooms in which they work. This study used a qualitative online survey and semi-structured interviews to explore early years' teacher's perceptions of mindfulness. Forty-four participants completed the online surveys, three participants were interviewed. Data were examined through an interpretivist lens that used Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as a framework for analysis. In this presentation, early findings of this research will be presented and avenues for future work will be discussed.

Keywords: contemplative practices, education, executive function, teacher burnout, mindfulness