




The Worry Monster: Mindful Movement Session (Catherine Cook-Cottone, 2025)

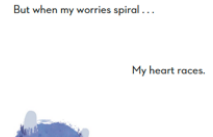








Objective: Help students understand and manage their worries through a fun and engaging mindful movement session, encouraging self-awareness, relaxation, and emotional regulation.

Set-up: Prepare the space by clearing any obstacles and ensuring there's enough room for each child to move freely without bumping into others. Arrange the area so students have personal spots (e.g., mats or designated floor markers) for both movement and quiet time. Keep the environment calm and inviting with soft lighting.

Process: Each page has a set of suggested moves that you can guide students through. Use them or make up your own. The goal is to combine movement, breath and meaning. This process will help the students self-calm and self-regulate their bodies. Give them time at the end to feel the results of their work.

Page	Teacher Script
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Place your hands on your stomach and take two belly breaths in and out. ● Wave “Hi!” to the Worry Monster. ● Take star pose. (Step feet wide part, hands reach out wide.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feet hip distance part, swing arms side to side letting your heels lift off the ground as you twist. ● Slow your twist down as you hug yourself, using both arms.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take star pose, breathing in. ● Bring hands to heart and step feet together, breathing out. ● Repeat four times.

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<p>But when my worries spiral ...</p>  <p>My heart races.</p>  <p>My claws burst out.</p>  <p>My fangs pop.</p>  <p>Then my brain makes up the BIGGEST and SCARIEST possible worries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring hands in toward the chest, palms facing out and forward and fingers clenched. Breathe in. • Breathe out as you take star pose with mouth wide open (my fangs pop)
<p>I go... FULL MONSTER!</p>  <p>It's a problem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect yourself into a chair pose with your knees bent and hands closed in fists by your shoulders, breathing in. • Move to star pose with your mouth wide open, breathing out (go full monster). • Repeat four times.
<p>For example, tomorrow my class is going on a field trip, and my worries are spiraling...</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swing arms side to side (repeat four times). • Swing arms in circles (repeat four times). • Change direction (repeat four times). • Allow for energy expression here.
<p>What if I miss the bus? MHHH!</p>  <p>What if I get lost? WHOA!</p>  <p>What if I need my pet dragon? EEEEK!</p>  <p>What about you—what are you worried about today?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run in place. • Hold hands on the sides of your head and gently roll your head in a circle. • Self-hug (miss my pet dragon)

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 <p>To help, my teacher shows me seven Mindful Monster Moves that can calm me down. Teacher says that sometimes I'll only need to do one, and sometimes I'll need all seven.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right foot lunge, right foot flat on floor, right knee bent stacking knee over ankle, on the ball of the back foot. • Left foot lunge, left foot in front, flat on floor, knee stacked over ankle, on the ball of back foot
<p>Could we try out these new Mindful Monster Moves together? That way I won't go FULL MONSTER again.</p> <p>1 Stretch your body right paw up and left paw up, BIG stretch. Paw on your heart and a paw on your belly. Settle down.</p>  <p>2 Take two deep breaths. Breathe in and count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Breathe out and count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Breathe in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Breathe out 1, 2, 3, 4, 5</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing with feet hip-distance apart, reach up with the right hand, and then the left hand. • Place one hand on your heart and the other on your belly. Notice your heart beating and your belly breathing. • Take two deep breaths—five seconds in, five seconds out.
<p>3 Now cross your arms and give yourself a hug. Pat each shoulder (watch your claws!).</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give yourself another hug • Crossing arms, pat your hands on your opposite shoulders.
<p>That's a little better... But I am still worried.</p> <p>What if I don't like what they have for lunch? What if I have to be quiet and giggle too loud? What if no one wants to sit with me on the bus?</p> <p>Isn't you worried?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand with legs a little more than hip-distance apart, bending knees and turn palms up and shrug a “what-if” gesture. • Go to star pose with mouth wide open and return to “what if” pose for each question.

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<p>Let's try the next Mindful Monster Move!</p>  <p>4 Use your eyes. Name four things you can SEE.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the students share four things they can see. • Place your hand on your forehead, thumb to forehead, pinky side out as if you are looking out to sea, and scan the room looking for things you can see.
 <p>Now use your ears. Name three things you can HEAR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the students name 3 things they can hear • Cup your right ear with your hand and move your head and body, working hard to scan for sounds.
 <p>Next, name two things you can TOUCH.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach your right hand high, reach your left hand high. repeat four times • Pat your lower legs • Pat your upper legs • Pat your belly • Cross your arms and pat your shoulders • Pat your heart
 <p>Last, name one thing you can SMELL.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step your feet hip-distance apart • Take a deep breath in through your nose • Exhale through your nose • Repeat two more times • Wave your hand in front of your nose, as if you are waving away a bad smell (dragon feet).
<p>Look how soothed I am— like I might be able to relax right here.</p>  <p>I don't need to worry about the field trip...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swinging side to side, allowing the arms to swing freely.

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<p>THE FIELD TRIP!!! OH NO!</p> <p>What if...?</p> <p>WHAT IF...?</p> <p>What if I get all monstered up again?</p> <p>I think a WORRY WAVE is coming!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand with legs a little more than hip-distance apart. Bend knees and turn palms up in a “what-if” gesture. • Go to star pose. Open your mouth wide and return to “what if” pose for each question.
<p>5 Looks like we need more Mindful Monster Moves! Here we go...</p> <p>Do you have a BIG worry? Mine is:</p> <p>"WHAT IF THEY LEAVE ME THERE AND I AM ALL ALONE?"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take surfboard pose with the right foot in front, both slightly knees bent, arms out to your sides, • Students can share their worries.
<p>Wow, these are big worry feelings!!! Breathe in and breathe out! Hold on—we can ride this wave.</p> <p>It's time to talk to our brains. Say it with me:</p> <p>"DO NOT ADD WORRIES! Breathe and ride the wave!"</p> <p>Look at that! This worry wave is getting smaller. Keep breathing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take surfboard pose with the left foot in front, both knees slightly bent, arms out to your sides. • Come to standing, feet hip-distance apart • Breathe in, arms up. • Breathe out, arms down. • Repeat two more times.
<p>Are you feeling better?</p> <p>6 Make soulful monsters—even worry monsters. That's the next move. Let's sing together!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow arms to swing freely, side to side.

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- Star pose with smile (you're okay).
- Right foot lifts, knee bent, balance on left foot (everyday).
- Stretch right foot back behind you, arms reach forward still balancing on your left foot (sing this song.)
- Left foot lifts, knee bent, balance on right foot and then stretch your left foot back behind you, arms reach forward still balancing on your right foot (all day long).



- Students can high five each other (can be air high fives) (or)
- Students can jump up, reaching hands in the air. Land with arms down and knees bent. (repeat 5 times).







- Buzz in a small circle like a dragon fly, arms out.
- Curl up into a ball.
- And then point to all the other students in class using both hands
- Students can stop here and share what they are grateful for.



- Right foot lunge, right foot flat on floor, right knee bent stacking knee over ankle, on the ball of the back foot.
- The left hand, hold out all five fingers and right hand, hold out two fingers (seven moves)
- Left foot lunge, left foot in front, flat on floor, knee stacked over ankle, on the ball of back foot

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right hand holds out all five fingers, left hand holds up two.
<p>As for this field trip tomorrow, I know I am going to have big feelings. So I will focus on the things that will help.</p>  <p>like practicing my breathing.</p>  <p>packing pickled squid to share.</p>  <p>and picking out my favorite stuffie for my backpack.</p> <p>What will you do the next time you're worried?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come to a seated position on the floor. • Put one hand on your belly and one on your heart – take two breaths.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With your hand on your belly and your hand on your heart, thank your body for being such a good helper as you all worked to help the worry monster make it to their field trip. • Take a big breath in and one big breath out. • One more—a big breath in and big breath out. • Everyone sign language clap for the Worry Monster! (raise both hands up to ear level, forming a 'five' handshape with your fingers and quickly rotate your wrists back and forth).