

Guernsey Educational Psychology Service

Wellbeing apps for kids

These apps can be used by both children and adults to support mental health and well-being.

All apps have been individually checked as to their appropriateness by the Guernsey Educational Psychology Service in April 2020.

We make every effort to recommend apps that have content that is appropriate for general audiences. However, we assume that adults will preview the apps based on their knowledge of the individual child's development and needs.



MindShift

(Android, iPhone, iPad)

MindShift app is based on to help young adults cope with anxiety, by acting as a portable coach that guides users through challenging situations. Designed in collaboration with Anxiety Canada, this app teaches users how to relax and helps them identify active steps to directly face and take charge of their anxiety.

The app provides a variety of methods for young people to respond to anxiety including; developing their knowledge of anxiety and symptoms, engaging in relaxation tasks, evaluating their level of anxiety in particular situations, developing realistic thinking patterns and changing behaviour.

Specific tools help users tackle issues such as improving their sleep quality, dealing with perfectionism, and handling conflict. These tools address everyday situations that contribute to increased levels of anxiety, in order to help users change their overall relationship with anxiety. The goal is to help young people learn and practice anxiety coping skills.



Headspace

(Android, iPhone, iPad)

Headspace: Guided Meditations and Mindfulness takes a calm, relaxed approach to bringing calm relaxation into the lives of adults and kids. Headspace app, aims to keep children “calm and focused” through short meditation exercises.

The app will help kids fall asleep and wake up peacefully. It uses common meditation techniques like becoming aware of environmental sounds, breath awareness, breath counting, and more. Kids can learn the basics of meditation and mindfulness. Kids can follow

the instructions and are reminded by the app to meditate each day. They can develop the habit of making time for personal growth and self-reflection in different situations, such as bedtime and waking up. It is also being used by mental health professionals and licensed therapists in medical sector.



Moodpath: Depression & Anxiety
(Android, iPhone, iPad)

Moodpath is an interactive depression and anxiety screening program. This app tracks psychological, emotional and physical health over a two-week period in order to generate a personalized mental health assessment that users can discuss with their physician or therapist. The app also contains an educational component to teach users about the psychology behind their mood, signs of depression, and psychotherapy.



Smiling Mind
(Android, iPhone, iPad)

Smiling Mind is designed to help people pressure, stress, and challenges of daily life. This app has a fantastic section on Mindfulness in the Classroom. An especially good choice for the younger users out there, as it was created specifically with students in mind. Smiling Mind offers programs for a variety of age groups, including 7-9, 10-12, 13-15, 16-18 and adults. The app has an easy-to-use interface for keeping track of your progress over time, both in terms of how many sessions you complete and how your emotions change.



Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame
(Android, iPhone, iPad)

Breathe, Think, and Do with Sesame is a free app that helps kids learn to deal with frustrating situations using the "breathe, think, do" method. They'll learn to take long, deep belly breaths to calm down, think of a few strategies to handle the problem, and then do those things. They'll develop resilience as they overcome frustrations and challenges on their own.

Even young children aged two to five can become more aware of their own emotions. Breathe, Think, Do features your child's favourite Sesame Street characters to help teach them skills such as problem-solving, self-control, planning and perseverance.



Calm
(Android, iPhone, iPad)

Calm is the perfect meditation app for beginners, but also includes hundreds of programs for intermediate and advanced users. Guided meditation sessions are available in lengths of 3, 5, 10, 15, 20 or 25 minutes so you can choose the perfect length to fit with your schedule.

Enjoy 100+ guided meditations to help you manage anxiety, lower stress and sleep better. Sleep Stories are soothing tales read by well-known voices to help people unwind and fall into a deep sleep each evening. Also enjoy 10 minute guided video lessons on mindful movement and gentle stretching.



Mindful Powers
(Android, iPhone, iPad)

Mindful Powers is one the best mindfulness app aimed at children aged between 7 and 10. The technique of mindfulness has been very positively received by many of those who have taken the time to learn and practice it. Adults have embraced mindfulness apps to aid their learning and practice.

The contents of this app in both presentation and method are well suited to the target age group. The child-friendly graphics have a dreamy quality and the audio is something of an ethereal soundscape. Guided stories lead children towards calmness and focus while a timer option helps them to apply what they have learned to real life.



Children's Bedtime Meditations for Sleep & Calm
(Android)

Anxiety, fear, and stress can lead to sleeplessness. Tiredness can amplify negative emotions. A vicious circle can form. If your child is a nighttime worrier kept from sleep by an unquiet mind, consider Children's Bedtime Meditations for Sleep & Calm.

This app is free and comes with six meditations that can be added to with in-app purchases. The gentle stories, soothing music and soft sounds are designed to calm and distract the mind so that children can drift off to sleep naturally. Try it once, for free, and see how it works. There's nothing to lose and a good night's sleep to gain.



For Me
(iPhone, iPad)

There are many different things that can impact a child's mental health. Even the most attentive parents might not be fully aware of any anxieties or problems that their children might have.

Made and supported by the charity Childline, For Me provides help and guidance for those that need it, both within the app and through easy connection to a counsellor. This is a free

app, so encourage your child to have it on their device. That way, if ever they do need help, they have a starting point and it is one that has always been there, not one that has been pushed on to them because of their problems. Even if they do not need it for themselves, it might help them support a friend who does.



The Zones of Regulation
(iPhone, iPad)

What do you get when a game developer works with an occupational therapist? Zones of Regulation, it seems. The game developer's sense of style and fun engage children with this app while the occupational therapist's influence guides children towards better control of their emotions.

Children identify the coloured 'zone' that they are in which corresponds to different groups of emotions. For example, anger is in the red and sadness in the blue. The app then guides children through these emotions and how to deal with them. The intention is to take children through the negative emotions into the calm and content ones. There are not many apps that link a child's love of games with mental wellbeing so this is one to check out.

Source of information: <https://www.educationalappstore.com/best-apps/5-best-mental-health-and-wellbeing-apps-for-kids>



Me: A Kid's Diary by Tinybop, £2.99

This interactive app will inspire your child to learn more about themselves and the people around them. It's designed to build self-awareness, self-confidence, empathy and kindness through a range of different journaling techniques.

Children start by creating their own avatar, personalising it with their skin colour, hairstyle, eye colour, and so on. They then click the thought cloud, which unleashes a new question or prompt to encourage them to think about who they are and what makes them tick.

Prompts include: 'this is my favourite place to hide,' 'this is my favourite book,' 'this is what I really want for my birthday,' and 'this is what my family will look like when I grow up.' They can record their answers in a whole host of different ways, including drawings, photos, text, animations and voice recordings.

These are all stored on a 'map' of who they are, and they can click each pinpoint to read or edit their previous answers. There are hundreds of questions in all, allowing your child to build a fully interactive profile and grow in their sense of identity.



Sleep Meditations for Kids

If you have an anxious child who finds it hard to drop off at night, this meditation app is well worth trying. Designed by a yoga and [Montessori](#) teacher, it's aimed at children aged 12 and under and can help with [sleep](#) issues, insomnia, [stress](#) and [anxiety](#), as well as promoting feelings of wellbeing.

The free 13-minute meditation begins by encouraging your child to imagine their worries floating up into a big balloon then drifting away. It then progresses through a number of relaxing story settings, before guiding your child to relax each part of their body in turn. Subtle sound effects and gentle music add to the sense of calm.

There are also several other meditations available to download for £2.99 each, including Bedtime Meditations for Kids, Enchanted Meditations for Kids, and Mermaids and Fairy Dust.



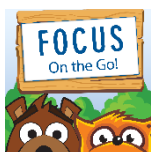
The Worrinots, £1.29 per month or £9.99 per year

The Worrinots are four friendly monsters who help your child deal with their worries. If there's something on their mind, they tap the 'what's up?' bubble, and are invited to choose one of the monsters to help them.

They can then type or speak their problem, click on how it makes them feel – sad, worried, scared or angry – and tap to make the fear disappear. A message from their chosen Worrinot appears in their inbox, explaining how it has dealt with your child's worries by stomping on them, ripping them up, jumping around or eating them.

There's also a Worri-tips section where your child can read advice on coping with issues like anxiety, bedwetting and families.

The really clever feature is the companion parent app, Wotnot. This has to be downloaded to a separate device and enables you to see what your child has told their Worrinots, so you can keep track of how they're feeling. You can also reply to their messages as a Worrinots character, so you can give them advice without them realising it's you.



FOCUS On the Go!

FOCUS stands for Families Overcoming Under Stress, and this app aims to teach resilience –

a key part of mental wellbeing – to every member of the family. It helps your child develop five essential skills: problem-solving, goal-setting, communication, emotional regulation, and managing trauma and stress.

The Play section is where your child is likely to spend most of their time, with three different games, including Bear Necessities, where your child has to build a track to roll a ball from top to bottom of the screen, testing their problem-solving ability and perseverance, and Feeling Finder, where they have to find emotion words in a wordsearch and then rate them on a scale from positive to negative.

The Comic Creator function, where your child can build cartoon strips involving their own characters and storylines, will help them share their ideas and feelings.

There's an extensive Resources section, with useful tools such as Feeling Foxes (expressive cartoon foxes with feeling words that help children name their emotions) and deep breathing and meditation exercises to work through with your child, along with videos and articles on subjects such as how to hold a family meeting.

The Resilience Surveys, which can be taken by you, your child, or the whole family, are also helpful in showing how you're getting on with building resilience.



Three, Good, Things

Evidence suggests that if you write three good things down every day, your happiness and positivity increase. This simple little app is a great way for your child to record what they're grateful for.

Each day, the app prompts them to think about what went well, with three boxes to type their comments in. They can add them all at once at the end of the day, or as they happen. They get to level up for recording their thoughts on streaks of consecutive days, and can look back at their history to remind themselves of the things they're thankful for.

Over time, the app will train your child to look for things to appreciate and make the practice of gratitude a habit.



Moshi: Sleep and Mindfulness

Moshi: Sleep and Mindfulness is designed to help children fall asleep, featuring a cast of cute Moshi Monsters: especially helpful for kids who struggle to settle at bedtime, or feel anxious about going to sleep.

The app has four different categories to help ease your child into sleep: stories, meditations, music and sounds. The stories have a variety of themes to appeal to children, including

transport, animals, Vikings and mermaids, and are narrated by well-known voices such as Patrick Stewart, Goldie Hawn and Brian Blessed.

The music category features relaxing classical pieces, while meditations guide your child through exercises to help them feel sleepy. If you'd prefer your child to listen to calming sounds, you can choose from options like raindrops, waves and cats purring. There are also short meditative relaxations (Moshi Moments) that your child can use whenever they feel anxious, and deep breathing exercises.

Moshi: Sleep and Mindfulness is primarily an audio app to stop kids getting distracted by animations when they should be sleeping. Most recordings last around 30 minutes, so there's plenty of time for your child to drift into sleep.



CBeebies Go Explore

Your Mindful Garden is one of a suite of activities for young children in the CBeebies Go Explore app, encouraging young children to grasp basic mindfulness techniques to improve their wellbeing through short, simple activities.

Voiced by Stephen Fry, Your Mindful Garden gives your child three new games-based mindfulness exercises each day, each with a different emphasis: focus, creativity and calm. Focus, for example, could be a simple matching pairs game intended to help clear your child's mind, while creativity could involve using a rake to 'draw' patterns in the sand in the Zen garden. Calm, meanwhile, prompts gentle activity such as stretching.

The three daily exercises only take 10 minutes or so, and once your child has completed them, they're awarded with an item to decorate their mindfulness tree. The tree then goes to sleep, ready to wake the next day with a new set of activities.

Source of information - <https://www.theschoolrun.com/best-wellbeing-apps-for-kids>



Stop Breathe & Think

A free tool to guide people of all ages and backgrounds through meditations for mindfulness and compassion. We think this app is very easy to use and like the quick meditations of around five minutes to get you back to earth feeling calm, cool and collected. We also love the idea that we have our own force field!



Recharge – Move Well, Sleep Well,

This app is all about improving mood and energy levels in a six-week personalised program. It helps to improve the sleep/wake routine with daily goals to get you rolling out of bed quick smart. We all want a little more energy and this worked pretty well to get us up and out of bed on the double.



FoodSwitch

FoodSwitch gives you information on foods and tips to make healthier choices. It incorporates the Health Star Rating system and traffic light labels. We like that it helps you pick healthier versions of prepackaged foods with ease. You can also decide what you want to focus on – salt, energy, fat or sugar as well as gluten, which is great for those with coeliac disease.



Strava

Track your activity from walking, cycling to swimming and more. Map your activity with a GPS and find out how you compare with your friends. This is nice and easy with lots of statistics at the end of your exercise session to beat next time.

Source of information - <https://healthy-kids.com.au/kids/high-school-2/apps-for-wellbeing/>



Pokemon GO

Pokémon GO isn't a fitness app, but it will definitely get your kids moving. Players must walk around in order to play the game. Pokémon are placed using augmented reality in real world locations, so players need to walk around to find them, and in order to hatch a Pokémon egg, players need to walk a certain distance.

- Ages: 9+
- Availability: iOS & Android
- Price: Free

Watch out for: Pokémon GO is a great game to get the entire family out and exploring while sneaking in some exercise. However, situational awareness is the key to being safe while playing Pokémon GO.

Pokémon GO is an interactive game and offers plenty of opportunities for players to engage with one another; parents should be aware of this before letting their children play alone or unsupervised.

Players can add one another as friends and can communicate with each other to compete in challenges, giving gifts, and trading Pokémon. Parents should also know that Pokémon GO offers in-app purchases, so spending expectations should be communicated before allowing your children to play.



SworKit Kids – Fitness Meets Fun

SworKit Kids turns exercising into a game with customizable workouts that build strength, agility, and flexibility. The app guides users through exercises that combine interval training with randomized exercises to keep kids from getting bored. The app challenges kids with questions like "how long can you hop on one foot?"

- Ages: 4+
- Availability: iOS & Android
- Price: Free

Watch out for: SworKit Kids should be used with adult supervision to ensure that exercises are completed properly. It's important that an adult is around to help correct improper form and prevent injury as SworKit Kids only gives verbal instructions for exercises.



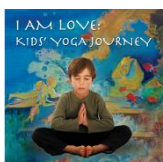
NFL Play 60

NFL Play 60 is an augmented reality game in which players take real steps to explore in the game. Players can collect NFL players to build their roster, play catch, train, and prepare with them for competition against other teams. When a player moves, jumps, turns, and dances while holding their phone, their virtual player does the same.

- Ages: 4+
- Availability: iOS & Android
- Price: Free

Watch out for: Parents must sign a release before their child begins playing NFL Play 60, which removes liability from the NFL and American Heart Association, should an injury occur while using the app.

Because NFL Play 60 requires movement to play, parents should review situational awareness with their children before playing and ensure that they have plenty of space to run as kids will be focusing on their device screen to lead them in the game. Parents want to ensure that their children have protective cases on their device, as they'll be running with their device in-hand, increasing the risk of damage.



Kids Yogaverse: I AM LOVE

This interactive yoga app is made just for kids. Kids are guided through 13 yoga poses that are demonstrated by children. Yoga can be a great way for kids to reduce stress and decompress before bed.

- Ages: 4+
- Availability: iOS & Android
- Price: £3.99 (iOS) & £0.99 (Android)

Watch out for: While I Am Love can be safely used alone, it's best for adults to go through the app, helping guide their child through each pose; it's also a great way for parents and children to practice yoga together. Once your child feels comfortable, they'll be able to go through a session with just the audio prompting poses.

Just Dance Now



Just Dance Now players dance to music and choreography using a smartphone as a controller and an internet-connected screen, such as a computer or Smart TV. This app will get your kids dancing to over 300 songs. Coins, the in-app currency, are used to play songs and they regenerate over time. There are also in-app purchases available for users that don't want to wait to play.

- Ages: 4+
- Availability: iOS & Android
- Price: Free

Watch out for: While Just Dance Now is free to play, expect your child to ask to make in-app purchases as much of the popular music is locked behind a paywall. You should also be aware that users receive only 200 coins per day, which translates into two songs; be prepared to be asked for coin purchases so that your child can continue to dance with the app.



GoNoodle Kids

GoNoodle Kids is an app used in schools that is designed to get kids moving. Through interactive videos, kids learn how to control energy, focus, and be positive with mindfulness. Players have a character in the game that gets cooler the more you move.

- Ages: 6+
- Availability: iOS
- Price: Free

Watch out for: GoNoodle Kids is an app meant to introduce quick bouts of movement in the classroom, so you should be aware that the modules are short. Don't expect GoNoodle Kids to engage your child for long.



This free yoga app features 10 poses and an animated character that guides kids through yoga poses. Each pose is illustrated and explained to make following along easier. Kids can reap the benefits of yoga by using this app.

- Ages: 4+
- Availability: Android
- Price: Free

Watch out for: Kid's Fitness - Yoga can be safely used alone, it's best for adults to go through the app, helping guide their child through each pose; it's also an excellent way for parents and children to practice yoga together.



Geocaching is a real world treasure hunt; there are geocaches hidden all over the world. Users of this app will need to go out and find the little treasures. This app acts as your toolbox and tells you everything you need to know to get started. Geocaching will require adult supervision.

- Ages: 10+
- Availability: iOS & Android
- Price: Free

Watch out for: Much like Pokémon GO, Geocaching requires children to be aware of their surroundings to ensure safety while playing. Geocaching is best done with an adult, especially if it requires driving to a new location and is a great activity for families to do together.



Zombies, Run! is a running game that motivates players to keep going. Players are taken on an audio adventure that makes them the centre of a zombie story. The app is great for young athletes that want to train but need a little motivation.

- Ages: 12+
- Availability: iOS & Android
- Price: Free

Watch out for: Because players will be running, *Zombies, Run!* requires them to be acutely aware of their surroundings. It's troubling that this fun app is audio-led, as it can be unsafe to run with headphones. It's important to note that the app features step-counting as a form of tracking, so, while not as thrilling, users can use the app around the house or on a treadmill.

What the Experts Say About Family Fitness and Screen Time for Kids

Unsurprisingly, research indicates that extended screen time for kids is directly linked to the development of sedentary lifestyles and childhood obesity. Increased time spent in front of a screen is connected with disrupted social development and social anxiety in children, as a result of not actively learning and practicing the basic socialization skills. And while studies have associated screen time with sleep disruption, a new study claims that sleep disruption is not significantly affected by time spent on screens. Read on to see what the experts have to say about screen time for kids.

Inactivity and Sedentary Behaviour

The American Heart Association released research findings that prove the link between screen use and a sedentary lifestyle; sedentary behaviour is directly linked to childhood obesity. Again, the sedentary behaviour, as a result of extended screen time for kids has caused childhood obesity rates to spike to almost 20 percent of the population. Now, more than ever, parents need to ensure that their children are developing active and healthy lifestyles, and the best place to start is with family fitness.

Social Isolation

While technology has made our lives much more comfortable, internet-connected digital devices aren't doing our children any favours in the socialization department. Yes, kids today can connect with people across the globe through the internet, but face-to-face, in-person social interaction is being lost at a time when it's most important. Psychiatrist Victoria L. Dunckley says, in an article for *Psychology Today*, that screen time for kids is arresting their social development and causing social anxiety.

Sleep Disruption

It's interesting to note that screen time has been associated with disrupted sleep in adolescents for several years, but a recent study says that the findings aren't as bad as they were made to seem. The BBC reports that researchers at Oxford University concluded that "the relationship between sleep and screen use in children was 'extremely modest.'" As with anything, the research should be taken with a grain of salt, given the sheer number of studies suggesting a correlation between disrupted sleep and screen use.

If your kids are reluctant to get moving, these apps will certainly motivate them to be active. Fitness apps are a great way to combine screen time with physical activity.

The apparent answer to screen time for kids is for parents to help their children balance their digital and physical lives. With Zift, parents are easily able to monitor their child's online activity, as well as to manage the apps they use and the websites they frequent.

Source of information - <https://wezift.com/parent-portal/blog/the-top-10-fitness-apps-to-get-kids-moving/>

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