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Practicing Mindfulness as a Space for Developing Vital and Hedonistic Values among Younger Schoolchildren

KEYWORDS ABSTRACT

mindfulness in education, hedonistic values, vital values, wellbeing, emotions, mental health, early school education.

The issues discussed in this article focus on hedonistic and vital values as well as mindfulness development techniques that can be tools for developing such values among children at younger school age. The first part of the paper presents the adopted theoretical perspective of considerations, placing vital and hedonistic values within the concept of integral human development and showing the connection between the practice of mindfulness and the development of those values. The second part is an outline of the research problems. Adopting the theoretical and cognitive, as well as practical-implementation goal, and posing research questions that emerged on the basis of the earlier diagnosis (SWOT analysis), which made it possible for us to identify the problem of the students participating in the study, the research project was implemented and carried out in 2019–2022. It included students from grades 1–3 of an elementary school in Bydgoszcz, using purposive sampling. The use of dialogue and observation methods made it possible to collect the empirical material the analysis of which indicates that the introduction of mindfulness development training into the system of education and upbringing of younger schoolchildren can be a therapeutic and/or preventive aspect in terms of mental health. Finally, the author draws conclusions and recommendations for educational practice, indicating that mindfulness practice is related to the development of students' skills in the area of coping with stress and negative emotions, and in managing life in a health-promoting and future-oriented way.

Introduction

The multitude of definitions, their interpretations and the resulting divisions and systematisation of the concept of values, may cause a certain terminological or even cognitive chaos. However, this diversity makes it possible to select what is relevant, useful and worth analysing in a specific area of interest. Education for values, as one of the goals set at the stage of early education, has become the subject of many studies, debates and research papers. This article attempts to discuss one of the groups of values, i. e. vital and hedonistic values, which are associated with specific developmental layers of the child, in the context of the opportunity to develop them through the practice of *mindfulness*. In addition to the theoretical approach, the author presents a report on her research. Mindfulness is gaining popularity in both academic circles and in the environments related to educational practice. Mindfulness exercises are seen as therapeutic and preventive ways of coping with stress and everyday problems; of learning to read one's own emotions and to control them. Taking care of one's own health, relaxation, healthy lifestyle, as well as creating opportunities to feel pleasure, are tasks that are connected with vital and hedonistic (pleasure) values. Mindfulness provides the tools for effective training based on building well-being and caring for one's own mental health, and thus answers the need to educate young people for the values indicated above.

In this article, **the issue of developing mindfulness is placed within an educational context and set on the ground of the educational process, with particular attention paid to two groups of values: vital and pleasure ones.** The text aims to show the possibilities of using elements taken from mindfulness in educational practice. The author attempts to answer the research question whether **mindfulness techniques, consciously introduced into the educational system, can be an effective tool used to achieve the goals of education for values.** The field of considerations is narrowed down to the sphere of biological development of a human being and the values associated with it, which is a consequence of including education for values in the context of integral human development.

Values at the first educational stage – the adopted perspective of considerations

In our search for the inner order and for the means by which we may overcome the inner chaos (Ostrowska 1998: 11), we consider various mental models and constructs that guide our choices, judgments or actions. Those of them that are deeply rooted, are values. In the most general terms, they are what we define as valuable and

important. Values, in the pedagogical sense, are understood as an important starting point for creating the aims of upbringing, i. e. the expectations related to the child's multifaceted development. Attention is drawn to the fact that they are determinants of a desired way of life, but, at the same time, the rules of conduct. They will change along with personal development at further stages of life (Gut, Piegowska, Wójcik 2008: 171–173). Learning the essence of values, understanding their role in human life, seeing the relationship between values and the goals of upbringing determines the initiation of the process of upbringing towards values, which is the key task and goal of upbringing at all stages of human development, including early childhood (Chąłas 2003: 15; Łobocki 2007: 60; Buk-Cegiełka 2018: 129).

Values, in a broad sense, determine human existence, the meaning and quality of life, attitudes towards oneself, groups, communities and the world. They are an important component of the view of the world and the regulation of behaviour (Chąłas 2003: 9; Kupisiewicz, Kupisiewicz 2009: 189). In the context of the considerations undertaken and the adopted research problem, particular attention is directed to actions and behaviours aimed at the child's mental health and well-being understood as a value. According to pedagogues, the relationship between the two is obvious as it is values that regulate human behaviour. From the perspective of upbringing and education for values, health should be seen as a practiced value, indicating a series of actions taken towards health (cf. Wojciechowska 2017: 186–187).

As a theoretical perspective for the research, the concept of integral human development is adopted. Such concept boils down to the coordination and harmony of the physical, psychological, social, spiritual, and religious spheres (cf. Chąłas 2007: 11). Also, I am referring to the stratified theory of human development by Stefan Kunowski (2000: 197) who identifies five overlapping strata shaped in the following order: (1) the biological stratum, (2) the psychological stratum, (3) the sociological stratum, (4) the culturological stratum, (5) the spiritual or worldview stratum. Each of these has its own time of development and requires appropriate external factors as educational influences. The one formed earlier provides the foundation for the development of the next. The physical development of a child at early school age mainly includes changes in the size and proportions of the body, the skeleton, muscles, internal organs (mainly the central nervous system), and motor development. In the area of psychology, cognitive processes develop in early childhood and become more conscious, directed and controlled by the child. The other layers: sociological, culturological, worldview, are superstructured over the biological and psychological layers. They will reach their maturity at a later stage. The biological layer develops most intensively in the early school age. Its proper development provides the foundation for other layers. **In the context of the considerations undertaken, I have located values and their importance in the integral development of a human being, placing them in**

particular layers of human development and focusing on the biological layer. It is with this layer that hedonistic, vital and material values are associated. The main vital values include taking care of health and safety, proper nutrition, leading a healthy lifestyle, movement, rest, sleep, and vital forces. Hedonistic (pleasure) values are associated with easy and pleasant life, and their fulfillment provides joy and satisfaction which are important factors of mental health (cf. Buk-Cegiełka 2018: 130–133) on which I particularly focus in this study. In his classification of values, the German philosopher Max Scheller also points to vital values of life, physical and mental health, and to hedonistic, sensual values related to experiencing pleasant and unpleasant states (Świtła 2019: 162). According to him, it is the hedonistic values that are the ones of the lowest order (Talarczyk 2004: 10). However, given the assumptions of the stratified theory of human development, it is these values, as being part of the biological layer of a human being, that should be the aim of the educational measures taken at the early education stage. That is why, we find vital and hedonistic values among the contents of the core curriculum for the first stage of education. Education for health values (caring for health, vital forces, leading a healthy lifestyle) is possible in natural science lessons, technical education and in physical education classes (cf. Buk-Cegiełka 2018: 135). However, one should consider the ways of education for these values, i. e. how to effectively implement them not only into the curriculum but, above all, into the life of a child? The author of this study undertook the research the results of which indicate that developing mindfulness can be an effective tool in educating young people for vital and hedonistic values.

Mindfulness in education. Contexts and ideas for education for values

Mindfulness (“fullness of the mind”, “full consciousness”) or, more broadly, *mindfulness-based approaches*, refer to the strategy aimed at the development of consciousness. Jon Kabat-Zinn, the creator of the most popular mindfulness-based stress reduction programme (MBSR), defines mindfulness as a special kind of attention: mindful, moment-directed and non-judgmental (Davis 2012: 31; Snel 2015: 8). Mental mindfulness is also defined as “[...] a set of mental health support techniques based on universal worldview elements, applicable to psycho-prevention and psychological therapy” (Dębska, Jacennik 2016: 196). Kabat-Zinn, who is believed to transfer mindfulness to the field of psychology, defines mindfulness as the awareness that arises as a result of deliberate, non-judgmental attention to the experience that is revealed in a given moment (Wegner, Wojciechowska 2016: 24). Mindfulness, on the one hand, is defined as a specific state (technique) and, on the other hand, as a target quality of

life (trait) which may result from individual predispositions or be the result of the application of various kinds of training. The classical definitions of mindfulness describe it as a state of ‘mental presence’, assuming the subject’s awareness of his or her own internal and external world which consists of a constantly changing stream of thoughts, emotions, behaviours and sensations (Radon 2014: 712). The common denominator of all definitional approaches to mindfulness is the **attainment of well-being** through seemingly simple tools that we have access to in almost every moment of our lives (Kosz-Szumaska 2020: 69). “Mental well-being”, “happiness” or “satisfaction” are conceptual categories often treated as synonyms. “Happiness” is a very broad concept. It is explained, among other things, as satisfaction experienced in contacts with the environment; a particular type of emotion; a positive evaluation of one’s life as a whole. Well-being, on the other hand, can be defined as the commonly used concept of “happiness”. It is difficult to provide a single, appropriate and universally accepted definition of happiness. However, it can be seen as a category closely related to the term “well-being”. In this article, “well-being” is understood as the result of a cognitive and emotional evaluation of one’s own life, when an individual perceives that positive experiences and pleasant emotions dominate in his or her environment, while the level of negative experiences and moods is low. It is not something that is given and a constant. That is why, it is important to undertake the reflection on what to do to be satisfied with life (Niśkiewicz 2016: 140–144). Recognising the potential of developing mindfulness, Daniel J. Siegel points out that, by being mindful, a child can learn to live differently: to enjoy the moment, to let go of judgements and expectations, to be more open to others and themselves. Mindfulness allows one to freely perceive the world with all senses: to enjoy food, to smell the air, to listen attentively, to look at one’s surroundings with attention, to stop for a moment and marvel at the beauty of nature (Hawn, Holden 2013: 13). The above-mentioned attempts to define mindfulness indicate some clues for parenting processes in the context of vital and hedonistic values.

Mindfulness is becoming increasingly popular in areas of social practice, including education, where it is treated as a therapeutic intervention (Górska 2019: 110), but also as a way of coping with stress, emotions, anxiety, and even depression.

The increase in the popularity of mindfulness has been influenced by numerous reports from empirical research indicating the possibilities and results of using the mindfulness practice. It has been confirmed to be effective in, e. g., reducing stress, treating anxiety disorders and depressive states, and even in reducing secondary symptoms of some somatic diseases (Górska 2019: 111). Teaching mindfulness aims to improve the quality of life by helping a person distance themselves from their habitual thoughts or behaviours. Practising mindfulness is meant to be a way of gaining distance from what is uncomfortable, painful and frightening by appropriately directing

attention and becoming aware of what is going on in one's mind and for what reason. Such awareness makes it possible to accept the current state and make a change that will increase the comfort of life (Dębska, Jacennik 2016: 198).

Therapy and the implementation of programmes based on the development of mindfulness have been discussed in many English-language studies supported by empirical research results. However, the scale of practice and research of this issue in Poland is still small (Kosz-Szumaska 2020: 69). The gradual **introduction of mindfulness into schools results from promising reports on the effectiveness of mindfulness training in various areas of mental health**, such as: stress, hyperactivity, social insensitivity, with which schools (also in Poland) have to cope. The introduction of mindfulness elements in schools is mainly preventive in nature. Teaching children and adolescents the basic principles of mental hygiene, such as self-observation, understanding the cause and effect of one's behaviour, mood, ways of influencing thinking, emotions and behaviour, **supports personal and social development, which consequently leads to mental maturity, and, at the same time, to a decrease in the occurrence of mental disorders** (Dębska, Jacennik 2016: 199).

There has not been much research on mindfulness-based interventions in schools, but what has been found allows one to conclude that developing mindfulness in children is satisfactorily effective. Positive results can be seen especially in the improvement of behaviour and reduction of anxiety. The research by Willem Kuyken indicates that children who use mindfulness are more likely to declare well-being and reduced stress levels. A summary of the results of the meta-analysis showed, among other things, that: (1) practising mindfulness by children has no adverse effects; (2) it is a popular intervention among children; (3) it has a good influence on one's mental health and well-being; (4) positive effects on social and affective skills have been shown; (5) physical health benefits (improved sleep and reduced cortisol levels) have been demonstrated (Afzal 2020: 26).

Based on the data presented above, research reports, and analyses of existing activities and interventions in the area of social life, one may formulate the thesis that **the intentional introduction of mindfulness techniques into the educational system can form the basis for the implementation of education for values related to health (especially mental health) among children and young people.**

Mindfulness in education for vital and hedonistic values

The issue of values is frequently discussed both in academic publications and in periodicals for teachers. Education for values is becoming an important school reality. Issues concerning values start to appear in school statutes, indicating the direction

of upbringing chosen by the school (Bryzgalski 1999: 3). It must be compliant with the educational core curriculum which states that ‘general education in the primary school is aimed at introducing students into the world of values, including generosity, cooperation, solidarity, altruism, patriotism and respect for tradition, at showing models of behaviour and building social relations facilitating safe development of the student (Journal of Laws 2017, item 356)’. The very fact that this provision is so general indicates that upbringing and education for values is an ambiguous and quite a vague term. Therefore, it does not designate anything more than certain ideals or intentions, and it fails to specify the direction and purpose of the actions taken. Such actions must be specified in educational programmes of schools. Therefore, it is important for pedagogues and teachers to have knowledge of values, to know their classifications and ways of defining them, in order to be able to choose those whose development is particularly necessary in view of the diagnosed needs of pupils. A thorough diagnosis may help us indicate the real needs of pupils and prevent us from fears about the fulfilment of values that are allegedly less important, because, as some authors of publications on values in the contemporary world indicate, “a threat in the field of upbringing towards values is treating emotional well-being as an important moral value and as the basic criterion of conduct” (Dziewiecki, after: Bryzgalski 1999: 5). The child’s well-being treated as a value is perceived here as a danger of the contemporary system of education. It is strange to make such claims when research reports indicate that the percentage of children who are dissatisfied with their lives is increasing, which, in turn, constitutes a threat to their mental health. In the report from the *National Survey on the Quality of Life of Children and Adolescents* conducted among children (pupils of the 2nd year of primary school), adolescents and young people, we can read that as many as 17% of schoolboys and 14% of schoolgirls report general dissatisfaction with their lives related to feeling happy, joyful and cheerful – to the extent that this threatens their mental health. In view of these alarming figures, experts point to the need to implement prevention programmes related to mental functioning. They also consider it extremely important to supplement the knowledge of teachers with issues related to mental health and the diagnosis of conditions that require intervention (cf. *Młodzi potrzebują... [The Young need...]* 2021).

Mindfulness as a set of techniques of mental health support can be successfully practised in psychological prevention. In this aspect, mindfulness means intentionally directing one’s attention in such a way as to make the person aware of their own mental state. The effectiveness of mindfulness techniques, such as breathing control, *body scan*, formal sitting, concentration on daily activities, is already well-known in the treatment of many psychological and somatic disorders. Practising mindfulness aims to improve people’s quality of life by making them distanced from habitual, intrusive thoughts and behaviours, and by helping them to consciously relax and reduce the

psychosomatic results of stress (cf. Dębska, Jacennik 2016: 198–199). This is particularly important because, as research findings show, children living in our times are experiencing increasingly more stress, and their childhood reality is full of tension, rush, rivalry, loneliness, and even rejection from adults or peers. Research shows that the age at which depression or anxiety is first experienced is decreasing (Afzal 2020: 24–25).

Extensive empirical evidence from research on people already practising mindfulness-based techniques indicates that **mindfulness training**, especially when **done systematically** (which is possible after implementing them into the educational system), **leads to changes that promote good health**. This is because of the reduction of the mind's tendency to react to external and internal stimuli causing emotional tension and stress. Practising mindfulness fosters the ability to be more flexible and minimise automatic reactions that cause or increase stress and emotional tensions. As a consequence, this leads to a deeper self-knowledge and the activation of self-regulatory processes, which, in turn, results in improved mental health and reduces the severity of cognitive and emotional disorders, which implies improved mental well-being. Other effects of mindfulness-based intervention in schools and kindergartens include, e. g., reduction of anxiety, better regulation of emotions, positive emotions and optimism (Radoń 2014: 714; Dębska, Jacennik 2016: 202; Górska 2019: 116–119).

When the child focuses on the experience of the present moment (e. g. the sensations related to conscious breathing), his or her mind quiets down. Transforming attention (quieting, focusing) leads to the transformation of emotions (seeing, reformulating), which is expected to result in the transformation of statements, actions and relationships (Greenland 2017: 2–3). The main aim of programmes promoting mindfulness focuses on learning how to be **here and now**, i. e. how to experience the present moment without judging it. This attitude is supposed to lead to the ability to separate the 'I' from one's own stressful thoughts, emotions and experiences. Practising mindfulness is meant to teach children and young people the basic principles of mental hygiene, such as self-observation and understanding the connections between thinking, acting and emotions. Through mindfulness training, children learn to treat themselves in a caring way, with full acceptance, so that they feel good and comfortable, which corresponds to hedonistic, but also vital values. Regular practice of mindfulness leads to the development of such behaviours and states of pleasure as enthusiasm, optimism or general well-being (cf. Snel 2015: 9; Górska 2019: 119–120). Very alarming are research reports indicating that children's feelings of pleasure, happiness and joy are becoming increasingly rare. Children are beginning to lose their mental resilience, they are bored, and they are just one step away from apathy (Hawn, Holden 2013: 35–37). Mindful being **here and now** allows a child to redirect their attention, consciously stop and reflect on their current mood, as well as name their emotions. Eline Snel, the author of the mindfulness programme: "Mindfulness, it

works!” for school-aged children, notes that children are naturally mindful, but, just like adults, they can sometimes be stressed, anxious and distracted. Many children do too much, without *being*. The antidote to this situation may include the skill of mindful being; of stopping to catch one’s breath and reflect on what one really needs in the moment (Snel 2015: 16).

Research procedure

With the growing interest in mindfulness and the introduction of its elements into schools, research is being initiated on the effectiveness of mindfulness teaching. However, there are still few references to the Polish educational system. The need to implement mindfulness training in Polish schools is emphasized by Anna Dębska and Barbara Jacennik who note that “the introduction of mindfulness training in Polish schools could effectively improve the social functioning and stress resistance of both students and teachers [...]. Learning mindfulness increases students’ knowledge and understanding of the impact of thoughts on emotions and behaviour, which may be an important factor in the prevention of depression and anxiety” (2016: 204). This article presents the results of the research undertaken between 2019 and 2022 on a mindfulness development programme implemented in primary school grades 1–3 in Bydgoszcz. The research sample was selected based on the author’s own knowledge of the study population and the aims of the study (Babbie 2009: 212). The purposive selection was influenced by the implementation of a programme based on mindfulness development in the respective school and by the completion of a certified MBSR course by teachers of grades 1–3. The research project had a **theoretical-cognitive aim**: to diagnose the mindfulness development programme implemented at the first stage of education, and a **practical-implementation aim**: learning about the mindfulness development method by early education teachers, and implementing its elements in the education and upbringing process. The following research problems were identified – general and detailed ones:

P: Whether and to what extent the introduction of mindfulness training into the education and upbringing of pupils at younger school ages can be an effective tool used to achieve the aims of education for values, with a therapeutic and/or preventive aspect in the context of mental health?

P₁: How does practicing mindfulness influence students’ skills in the area of coping with stress and negative emotions?

P₂: How does practicing mindfulness interact with students’ skills in managing their lives in a health-oriented and future-oriented way?

A qualitative research strategy was adopted, using the dialogue method (after: Łobocki 2005): the researcher's interview with early childhood education teachers implementing mindfulness training in grades 1–3, and the observation method carried out by both the researcher and the teachers who implement the mindfulness programme in their classroom units. The qualitative approach assumes the lack of presuppositions in learning about the nature of the phenomenon under study, and in addressing little-known problems that the researcher senses rather than knows about (Pilch, Bauman 2001: 279–280). That is why, in the research undertaken, the formulation of hypotheses, variables and their indicators was abandoned. The research project involved eight early education teachers and eight classes at the first stage of education. The implementation of mindfulness training was preceded by a diagnosis (SWOT analysis) to identify the problem: pupils cannot cope with stress and negative feelings; personal competences need to be systematically improved in order to enhance their ability to manage life in a healthy manner. **Within the framework of direct, standardized observation**, the teachers recorded observational data related to the stated research objective and research problems. The observed facts and phenomena referred to the behaviour and utterances of the pupils focusing on the shaped skills of self-knowledge: recognition of one's own thoughts, emotions, feelings flowing from the body; the ability to focus attention on a selected stimulus; the awareness of breathing and redirecting attention to breathing and conscious movement. The research project also involved cooperation and knowledge sharing among teachers: analysing and verifying the techniques used in class with children to develop mindfulness. **The dialogue method** makes it possible to use free conversation for research purposes. In the case of the ongoing project, such conversation took place between teachers and the researcher. Meetings were also held periodically with a certified MBSR mindfulness trainer, during which further activities were planned and the effectiveness of already implemented activities was discussed. The free exchange of information and experiences made it possible to formulate conclusions and verify the research problems. The applied research procedure facilitated the integration of thoughts and actions, as well as the reflections on the implemented project.

Mindfulness as a source of tools for developing vitality and hedonistic values. Contexts, selected findings and conclusions from the research

The analysis of the collected empirical material indicates that the introduction of mindfulness training into the education and upbringing of pupils at younger school age can be a therapeutic and/or preventive aspect in terms of mental health. Based on

the observations of pupils' behaviour, teachers implementing a programme based on developing mindfulness found that students:

- can “feel” their bodies and show the parts which signal tension;
- are able to calm themselves in difficult situations by consciously using breathing techniques (mindful breathing practice) and relaxation techniques during the classes, e. g. before a test;
- cope with the problem of “chasing thoughts” better because of the ability to consciously direct their thoughts and distance from them;
- are more open to their own and others' emotions through noticing and understanding emotions without having to react to them: recognising and naming emotions;
- are more focused during the classes thanks to attentiveness techniques such as moments of stillness and silence: concentration and motivation to make a mental effort).

Through the use of the dialogue method, teachers were able to collaborate, sharing their experience not only with the researcher, but also with each other. During regular meetings and supervision, the teachers discussed the activities they had carried out with the students, as well as analysed and reviewed various MBSR techniques, reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of the activities undertaken. The respondents pointed to the high effectiveness of initiatives such as the use of different techniques and tools for developing mindfulness during lessons with pupils, which contributes to the formation of the following skills of children:

- getting to know oneself by sensitively feeling one's own thoughts, emotions and body sensations;
- the ability to focus attention on a selected stimulus;
- the ability to breathe consciously and redirect attention to breathing and conscious movement.

On the basis of the indicators documented during the observation, and as a result of the interviews (dialogue method), the categories identified were classified and conclusions were drawn. The work with the collected empirical material is exemplified in Table 1 and Diagram 1.

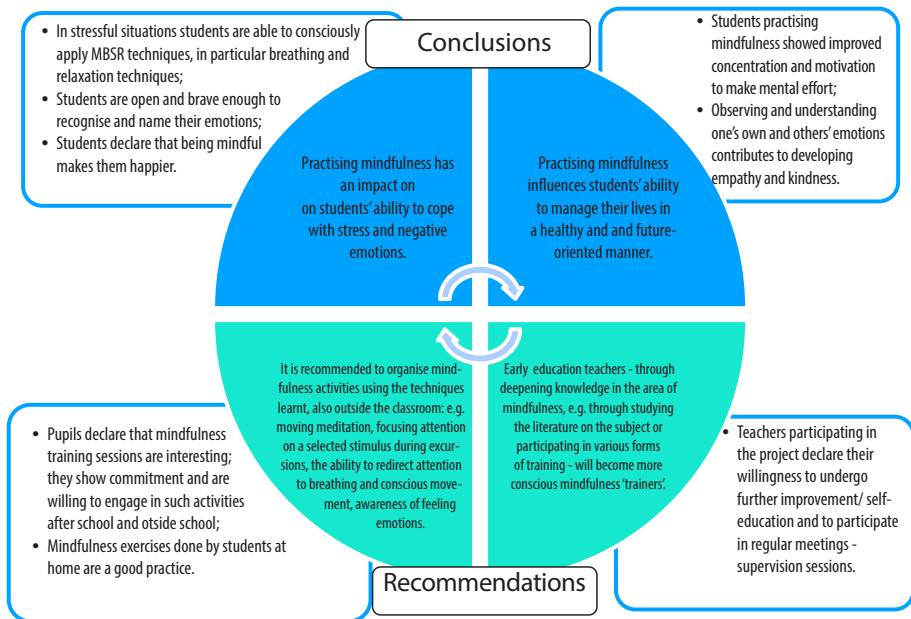
Table 1. Shaping vital and hedonistic values and development of mindfulness

VALUES	AREA OF MINDFULNESS DEVELOPMENT		
	Focusing attention and conscious direction of attention	Mindfulness focused on the senses	Mindfulness focused on the emotions
Practices of mindfulness development that were implemented			
Vital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sitting meditation; body scanning; breathing exercises and plays; mindful movement; elements of yoga; focusing on one's breathing out; drawing the breath wave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exercises aimed at feeling one's body and its signals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> following one's breath: reduction of stress and tension; diaphragmatic breathing when feeling anxious or nervous.
Hedonistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mindful listening without disrupting the interlocutor's utterance; mindful watching of one's own hand; mindful walking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mindful walks: feeling the surrounding world with the sense of smell, touch, sight and hearing; mindful participation in feasts and celebrations; mindful eating; laughter yoga; mindful listening to a given sound. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exercise with a relaxation glitter jar which helps to calm the emotions; taking photos with one's heart: memorizing special and unique moments.

Source: the author's own research.

The analysis of the collected empirical material made it possible to draw conclusions and recommendations for educational practice.

Diagram 1. Conclusions and recommendations for educational practice



Source: the author's own research.

Based on the interpretation of the collected research material, it is not possible to make a definite thesis that children's practice of mindfulness will improve their physical or mental health. However, it can be concluded that **mindfulness exercises provide an opportunity to develop vital and hedonistic values** by supporting habits of caring for one's own health, well-being, rest, leading a healthy lifestyle, taking pleasure in sensory experiences, redirecting attention, responding to body signals, as well as naming and understanding one's own emotions. This may be confirmed by the words of students who were exposed to practices based on mindfulness in the 'here and now'. They described their feelings as follows (selected utterances from students recorded during the implementation of mindfulness activities):

- *I was curious;*
- *I felt great;*
- *I like this exercise because it calms me down and all my thoughts drift away;*
- *this exercise gives me strength;*
- *I had very pleasant feelings;*
- *I became very sad. Then a few deep breaths helped me;*
- *I felt joy; it was fun to be attentive during the 'Santa Claus party';*

- *I decided to watch the faces of everyone close to me [...], it was very pleasant and interesting because everyone was happy and smiling at each other;*
- *I was happy, joyful and excited;*
- *I noticed the children smiling at each other; I felt happiness and curiosity;*
- *breathing helped me [...] when I couldn't wait for the presents; [...] I felt so much joy that I had to take a few breaths first to calm down.*

The statements collected above also indicate that being mindful is not only about the moment of formal practice (e. g. during school activities), but it goes beyond the school setting, providing the basis for managing life in a mindful, health-promoting way in different life situations and at different times (future orientation).

Conclusion

Moral values still constitute the most frequently discussed kind of values in a child's life. It seems important to consider education for values in the context of the child's developmental stage. Such a holistic view makes it possible to select those values the formation of which is most desirable and appropriate for the child at a given age. The early school period is when the biological layer develops most intensively, and upbringing activities carried out at that time should be targeted at this layer. As Władysław Cichoń notes, a human being is a unity made up of many components, so his/her harmonious development will require an even influence on each of them and an even growth of all the factors that constitute the person. Also, the world of values does not consist only of moral values, but of many other equally important human values. Upbringing – if its task is to be the comprehensive development of a child – must affect the pupil holistically (Cichoń 1996: 115). In this perspective, hedonistic and vital values, which correspond to the development of the biological layer, should be the focal point of educational influences exerted by conscious and reflective pedagogues on children at an early school age. Only such a teacher will see the real needs of the child and take the trouble to plan and implement activities that do not always clearly result from top-down directives, but constitute an innovative form that can even be perceived as controversial as it may not be fully understood by all the subjects of education. In this context, I am close to the words of Bogusław Śliwerski who defines a teacher as an artist, i. e. someone creative. Then, the effect of upbringing becomes that for which the pupil himself must take responsibility (Śliwerski 2010: 139). In the case of the reflections undertaken in this text, it will be the broadly understood well-being and physical and mental health treated as a value that has “causative power and appears in human life in the form of a compass that determines the direction of conduct” (Denek after Łobocki 2002: 77). Can mindfulness practice become a tool

for managing this compass? The answer to this question should be sought primarily through debates in educational circles and through ongoing research projects. The results of the study conducted by Kimberly Schonert-Reichl show a 63% increase in optimism among participants, i. e. more than 200.000 children. Thus, we already have a number of reviews and meta-analyses involving research on the outcomes of interventions based on mindfulness teaching, which suggest that practicing mindfulness helps to promote mental and physical health, while also teaching young people how to be happy (Hawn, Holden 2013: 25–26; Germer 2015: 62).

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Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 14.02.2017 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego dla szkoły podstawowej [Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14.02.2017 on the core curriculum for preschools and primary schools]. Journal of Laws 2017, item 356. <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=wdu20170000356>

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