



MINDFUL FOUNDATIONS
WHAT EVERY CHILD DESERVES

**Mindful Foundations Curriculum Alignment with
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) – Three-Tiered
Framework**



About This Document

This document maps the key components of Mindful Foundations (Mercedes Finstuen, 2026) to the three-tiered PBIS framework (Center on PBIS). PBIS is an evidence-based, tiered framework for supporting students' behavioral, social, emotional, and academic growth through systems, data, practices, outcomes, and equity. Mindful Foundations and PBIS share a foundational philosophy: that safe, predictable, relationship-centered environments — established proactively and universally — are the prerequisite for student learning and behavioral success.

● Tier 1 — Universal (All Students)	● Tier 2 — Targeted (Some Students)	● Tier 3 — Intensive (Few Students)
Foundation for all students. Proactive, schoolwide positive expectations, SEB skill teaching, consistent routines, and acknowledgment systems.	Targeted support for students at risk. Group-based, more focused interventions with increased monitoring for ~15% of students.	Intensive, individualized support for 1–5% of students. Function-based, multi-disciplinary, highly personalized intervention.

Tier 1 Alignment — Universal Support (All Students)

Mindful Foundations Component	PBIS Tier	PBIS Element / Practice Area	Description of Alignment
L.O.V.E.E. Method — Foundation, Regulation, Education Cycle (All weeks)	Tier 1	Schoolwide Positive Expectations & SEB Skills Defined and Taught	The L.O.V.E.E. three-phase cycle (Foundation → Regulation → Education) functions as a universal, proactive framework that teaches positive social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) skills to all students before problems escalate. This mirrors PBIS Tier 1's core principle of teaching expected behaviors rather than only responding to unwanted ones.
L.O.V.E.E. Classroom Expectations: 'Be Respectful. Be Responsible. Choose Kindness.' (Part 2 / Lesson 3B, 4B)	Tier 1	Schoolwide Positive Expectations Defined (3–5 positively stated)	Mindful Foundations establishes 3 positively stated classroom expectations consistent with PBIS Tier 1 best practice. Expectations are introduced, modeled, and practiced repeatedly across settings, so all students can articulate and demonstrate them in action.
Daily Routine & Transition Structures (Arrival, Calm Signal, Calm Island, Cleanup, Lineup — All weeks)	Tier 1	Classroom Procedures & Predictable Environment	Predictable daily schedules and transition procedures are established and practiced from Week 1. PBIS Tier 1 requires consistent classroom procedures taught proactively. Mindful Foundations' structured daily flow directly fulfills this practice by creating a calm, predictable learning environment that prevents behavioral escalation.
Emotional Literacy Core Vocabulary (Weeks 1–5, daily modeling)	Tier 1	Teaching SEB Skills Explicitly	Mindful Foundations introduces weekly SEL vocabulary (calm, frustrated, worry, anxiety, advocate, accept, choice, control) embedded into daily teacher dialogue. PBIS Tier 1 requires explicitly teaching SEB skills schoolwide—Mindful Foundations does this through consistent vocabulary instruction across all classroom interactions.
Reward Jar & Positive Reinforcement System (Weeks 2–5)	Tier 1	Acknowledging Appropriate Behavior	Students earn tokens toward a classroom reward jar for demonstrating breathing strategies, emotional regulation, trust, and responsible choices. This directly implements PBIS Tier 1's requirement for a schoolwide system to acknowledge and reinforce expected behaviors consistently and positively.



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Mindful Strategy of the Day / Peaceful Pause (Daily, all weeks)	Tier 1	Prevention & Proactive Support	Every lesson day begins with the Peaceful Pause—a whole-class regulation reset before instruction begins. PBIS Tier 1 emphasizes early, proactive prevention. The Peaceful Pause functions as a universal daily prevention practice that reduces the likelihood of behavioral escalation by establishing calm before academic demands.
Breathing Strategies (10+ strategies, Toolkit V) (Rollercoaster, Raindrops, Pretzel, etc.)	Tier 1	Evidence-Based Practices for SEB Skills	Mindful Foundations' breathing strategy library draws from evidence-based mindfulness and neuroscience research. PBIS Tier 1 requires the use of research-based, scientifically validated interventions. Daily breath work is a well-documented evidence-based self-regulation strategy appropriate for universal implementation.
Classroom Physical Environment Setup (Part 2 & Toolkit I: Pre-Implementation Setup)	Tier 1	Positive, Predictable Physical Environment	Toolkit I guides teachers through intentional classroom design—including seating, the Calm Island station, visual supports, and affirmation displays. PBIS Tier 1 requires that the physical environment be organized to support expected behaviors. Mindful Foundations addresses this through pre-implementation environmental preparation.
Daily Affirmations (Weeks 1–5)	Tier 1	Positive School Climate & Belonging	Science-based affirmations are used daily as a universal classroom climate practice. PBIS Tier 1 aims to create a positive, safe, equitable learning environment where everyone thrives. Daily affirmations build positive self-concept and psychological safety for all students, strengthening schoolwide climate.
L.O.V.E.E. Literacy Connection / Read-Alouds (Weekly, Toolkit II)	Tier 1	Teaching SEB Skills Explicitly	Weekly read-alouds with curated books modeling classroom behavior, empathy, and social skills provide explicit, structured SEL instruction embedded in literacy. PBIS Tier 1 requires that SEB skills be taught directly across settings—the literacy connection integrates this teaching into daily academic routines.
Home Connection Packets & Family Communication (All weeks, Toolkits VII & VIII)	Tier 1	Family Engagement & Community Partnership	Weekly Home Connection Packets, parent letters, and weekend reinforcement materials engage families as partners in the PBIS framework. PBIS Tier 1 explicitly requires engaging students, families, and community members to co-create culturally responsive practices. Mindful Foundations builds this partnership from Week 1.
Swivl Video Recording & Reflective Practice Conversations (Toolkit IV, all weeks)	Tier 1	Data-Based Monitoring & Evaluation	Daily video recordings using the Swivl device and structured Reflective Practice Conversations allow teaching teams to observe, document, and discuss student behavioral patterns. PBIS Tier 1 requires ongoing data-based monitoring and evaluation to guide decision-making—Mindful Foundations builds this into the implementation structure through daily observation and weekly reflection routines.
Pre-Implementation Team Huddle & Alignment Sessions (Toolkit I: Pre-Implementation Setup)	Tier 1	Leadership Team & Professional Development	Mindful Foundations requires all teaching staff and site leads to complete alignment huddles, review curriculum, and participate in the teacher self-reflection journey before implementation begins. PBIS Tier 1 calls for a leadership team, shared commitment, and professional development



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			for all personnel—this pre-implementation process directly fulfills that requirement.
L.O.V.E.E. Behavior Response Guide (Toolkit III)	Tier 1	Responding Instructionally to Unwanted Behaviors	Toolkit III provides structured behavior response guides that help teachers respond to unwanted behaviors with an instructional, non-punitive approach. PBIS Tier 1 requires consistent, instructional responses to unwanted behaviors across all staff. Mindful Foundations formalizes this through scripted, trauma-informed response protocols.

Tier 2 Alignment — Targeted Support (Some Students)

Mindful Foundations Component	PBIS Tier	PBIS Element / Practice Area	Description of Alignment
Fade-Away Approach — Real-Time Adaptive Support (Weeks 2–5)	Tier 2	Targeted Support — Differentiating Intensity	The Fade-Away Approach allows teachers to increase or decrease support in real time based on each child's behavioral and emotional readiness. Children who do not yet demonstrate mastery of routines or regulation receive continued direct support, while others move toward independence. This real-time differentiation mirrors Tier 2's function of providing more focused support than Tier 1 for students who need it.
Guided Meditations & Role-Play Scenarios (Weeks 3–5)	Tier 2	Social Skills Groups & Targeted SEB Instruction	Meditation and role-play activities offer deeper, structured social-emotional skill instruction embedded within whole-group time but specifically targeting the skills students with regulation challenges need most. This aligns with Tier 2's emphasis on group-based, targeted SEB skill instruction—especially social problem-solving, co-regulation, and emotional awareness.
Co-Regulation Strategies (Heart-to-Heart Hug, Calm Space) (Throughout, Fade-Away Notes)	Tier 2	Targeted Behavioral Support for At-Risk Students	Mindful Foundations explicitly identifies students who need direct co-regulation (especially those with trauma histories) and provides specific strategies including heart-to-heart hugs and access to a calmer space with teacher support. This targeted, relationship-based co-regulation practice aligns with Tier 2 supports for students at risk of developing more serious behavioral challenges.
Parent-Teacher Planning Sessions (Toolkit IV — Initiated based on video observation patterns)	Tier 2	Targeted Family Collaboration & Check-In Supports	When Swivl observation data reveals consistent behavioral, emotional, or peer-interaction patterns, Mindful Foundations directs teachers to initiate Parent-Teacher Planning Sessions. This data-driven, family-involved problem-solving mirrors Tier 2's requirement for targeted collaboration with families to support students with elevated needs before they escalate to Tier 3.
Reward Jar — Individualized Behavioral Reinforcement (Weeks 2–5, adapted per child)	Tier 2	Increased Acknowledgment & Behavioral Reinforcement	While the reward jar is a Tier 1 practice, Mindful Foundations guides teachers to increase acknowledgment frequency and specificity for children who need more behavioral reinforcement. This individualized increase in positive reinforcement—celebrating specific regulation skills and small wins—functions as a Tier 2 intensity adjustment within the universal system.



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Calm Island / Calm Down Space (Toolkit II & Part 2)	Tier 2	Self-Management & De-escalation Supports	The Calm Island is a dedicated classroom space with sensory and regulation tools available to children when they are dysregulated. PBIS Tier 2 includes self-management strategies and targeted behavioral support. Calm Island access provides a structured, proactive de-escalation pathway for students at risk of behavioral escalation before it becomes a more serious incident.
Swivl Observation: Identifying Patterns by Child (Toolkit IV)	Tier 2	Progress Monitoring & Data-Based Identification	Teachers use video recordings to observe individual children's behavioral patterns across contexts (whole group, centers, free play). PBIS Tier 2 requires data-based identification of students needing targeted support and ongoing monitoring of their progress. Mindful Foundations' video-based observation protocol provides the mechanism for this regular, individualized progress monitoring.

Tier 3 Alignment — Intensive Support (Few Students)

Mindful Foundations Component	PBIS Tier	PBIS Element / Practice Area	Description of Alignment
L.O.V.E.E. Behavior Response Guide — Individualized Plans (Toolkit III)	Tier 3	Individualized Behavior Support Plans	For children whose behaviors require individualized response strategies, Toolkit III provides a structured behavior guide that can be adapted to address specific behavioral functions and needs. PBIS Tier 3 requires individualized behavior support plans tailored to the function of a student's behavior. The L.O.V.E.E. Behavior Response Guide provides the foundational structure for building these plans.
Multi-Specialist Collaboration (Part 2: Pre-Implementation Alignment Huddle — Speech Language Pathologist, Behavioral Analyst, SEL Specialist)	Tier 3	Multi-Disciplinary Team & Behavior Support Expertise	Mindful Foundations explicitly incorporates specialists—including Speech Language Pathologists, Behavioral Analysts, and Social-Emotional Learning Specialists—into the implementation team. PBIS Tier 3 requires a multi-disciplinary team with applied behavior expertise. The inclusion of these specialists in Mindful Foundations' model creates the interdisciplinary support structure Tier 3 demands.
Conscious Discipline Brain State Model Integration (Part 1 & throughout curriculum)	Tier 3	Function-Based Understanding of Behavior	The Conscious Discipline Brain State Model teaches educators to identify whether a child is in survival, emotional, or executive brain state—and to understand the function driving their behavior (Am I safe? Am I loved? What can I learn?). PBIS Tier 3 requires functional behavior assessment (FBA) to identify why a student behaves as they do. The brain state model provides a trauma-informed FBA lens embedded throughout the curriculum.
Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Stages — Developmental Readiness Assessment (Part 1 & throughout)	Tier 3	Individualized Assessment to Determine Developmental Level of Need	Mindful Foundations directs teachers to assess each child's actual psychosocial stage—not just chronological age—to identify where they are developmentally. This individualized assessment of developmental readiness parallels Tier 3's requirement to conduct individualized



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			assessments that inform targeted, function-based interventions for students with the most intensive needs.
Returning to Earlier L.O.V.E.E. Phases When Dysregulation Recurs (L.O.V.E.E. Cycle — non-linear design)	Tier 3	Individualized, Flexible Intervention Response	Mindful Foundations explicitly describes the L.O.V.E.E. cycle as a 'dance, not a checklist' — when dysregulation returns, teachers return to earlier foundation and regulation phases rather than progressing linearly. This individualized, flexible response to a child's real-time needs reflects Tier 3's emphasis on highly individualized supports that adapt to each student's changing behavioral profile.
Swivl Observation Data — Formal Documentation of Behavioral Patterns (Toolkit IV)	Tier 3	Formal Fidelity & Outcome Data Collection	For students with intensive needs, Swivl video recordings provide formal, documented behavioral observation data over time. PBIS Tier 3 requires formal fidelity and outcome data collection to drive decision-making and evaluate effectiveness of individualized supports. Mindful Foundations' video observation system provides the data infrastructure needed to support Tier 3 documentation requirements.

PBIS Five Elements — Mindful Foundations Coverage Summary

PBIS Element	Tier(s)	Mindful Foundations Components that Address This Element
Systems	1, 2, 3	Pre-Implementation Alignment Huddle, Leadership Team Integration, Swivl Observation Infrastructure, Reflective Practice Conversations, Professional Development (Teacher Self-Reflection Journey)
Data	1, 2, 3	Daily Swivl Video Recordings, Reflective Practice Conversation Documentation, Parent-Teacher Planning Sessions (triggered by data patterns), Behavioral Progress Monitoring, Swivl Observation and Reflection Guide
Practices	1, 2, 3	Daily Peaceful Pause, Breathing Strategy Library, Guided Meditations, Read-Alouds, Affirmations, L.O.V.E.E. Behavior Response Guide, Calm Island, Classroom Expectations, Fade-Away Approach, Co-Regulation Strategies, Role-Play Scenarios
Outcomes	1, 2, 3	Reduced behavioral dysregulation, Improved emotional self-regulation, Trusting teacher-child relationships, Increased classroom readiness for learning, Reduced exclusionary responses to behavior, Positive school climate
Equity	1, 2, 3	Trauma-informed lens (addresses disproportionate impact on trauma-affected children), Developmentally responsive (stage over age), Family partnership (Home Connection Packets), Strengths-based behavioral language, Non-exclusionary behavioral response protocols, Sign Language tools (multilingual/multimodal access)

Note: Mindful Foundations was designed as a standalone trauma-informed classroom management curriculum, not as a PBIS replacement. It is most powerful when implemented as the Tier 1 universal foundation within a school or program already using or implementing PBIS. Its SEL depth, trauma-informed philosophy, and family engagement components complement and strengthen all three PBIS tiers.