



## ACTIVITY 2: YOUR RIGHT TO A HEALTHY LIFE

**AIM:** Children are introduced to the OutRight topic of mental health and wellbeing and begin to make connections between mental and physical health, and how these link to a child's right to health (Article 24).

### Preparation:

- Review the body scan activity
- Prepare the space for the body tracing activity (for in-person facilitation)

### Facilitator materials and resources:

- Activity 2 Presentation
- Flip chart paper
- Non-permanent markers for tracing
- [The Mental Health Teacher Body Scan video](#)

### Participant materials:

- Piece of paper
- Coloured pens

### Tips for those working in Early Years settings:

- The body tracing activity will work well for this age group
- Watch one or more of these videos about emotions and use circle time to explore the meaning behind these: [Story Bots](#), [The Colour Monster](#), [Ruby's Worry](#)

### Facilitator introduction

*Remind the children of Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) – the right to good health. Ask them: what do we think about when we think about being healthy? Most of us think about good health as not being 'sick' or 'ill'. If we have a broken leg, or a bad cold, or have to go to hospital because of an accident, we know we are ill. But what about health problems that we cannot see so easily?*

*Explain to the children that science tells us that our bodies and brains are connected. A child's right to health must include both mental health and physical health, and adults must do what they can to protect this right and do what is in the best interests of children (Article 3).*



## Part 1: Warm-up body scan

1. Begin the body scan mindfulness exercise by asking children to sit quietly with their eyes closed for one minute, sitting on the floor or in a chair or whatever is comfortable and practical for the activity space. If you like, use the The Mental Health Teacher Body Scan video to facilitate the activity. If doing the activity without the video, explain to children that most of our day we spend time focusing on everything that is going on outside of our bodies. This activity is about focusing on what is going on inside of our bodies.

2. Instruct children to focus on how their body feels. Explain that we are not trying to change how we feel, we are just going to focus on and notice how we feel.

3. Begin by asking children to notice how they are sitting or lying. Can they feel where their body connects to the chair or to the floor? Can they feel their breath going in and out? Ask the children to focus on and notice, rather than try to change, how they are feeling.

4. Explain that in this exercise we are going to pretend like we are in an x-ray machine, looking into our bodies one body part at a time. Direct children to move their attention slowly through their body, checking in with their senses and body parts from head to toe.

For example: *Think about your feet. Only your feet. Wiggle your toes. Now keep your feet still. How do your feet feel? Are they hot? Are they cold? Can you feel your socks?*

Walk children through each body part (from the feet to the ankles, legs, knees, hips, belly, arms, shoulders, neck, mouth, nose, ears, eyes, and the top of your head). Prompt children to notice any physical feelings or sensations, like tiredness, temperature, a breeze on the skin, or how clothes feel against the skin. Remind children through the activity to focus on their breathing as a way to relax.

5. At the end of the exercise, once children have opened their eyes, ask them to share any feelings or sensations that they noticed, reminding them that any feeling is okay. Our job in this activity was not to fix anything, but only to pay attention and to breathe. Complete the exercise by introducing the idea that we have many body parts, yet our bodies are all one big system.



## Part 2: Healthy minds and healthy bodies

1. Split children into small groups or form a circle of one large group. Give each group a big piece of drawing paper large enough to trace an outline of a child's body (tape together multiple flip chart pages or ask a child to lay on the playground and trace the body with chalk). If time and supplies allow, each child could create their own body tracing. Be sure to use non-permanent marking pens!

**Tip for virtual facilitation:** Each child could draw their own picture of a child's body, and the lesson can be facilitated with the Activity Presentation.

2. Draw a face on the child, explaining that the picture could represent any child from their class, group or community. Remind the group of Article 24 – that all children have a right to good health.

3. Ask the children, "What does it mean for a child to have good health?" Encourage them to call out their ideas of what they think a healthy child might look like or feel like. Ask the children to write down their answers on the corresponding area of the body. Encourage the children to recall the feelings they recognised in the body scan warm-up.

4. Prompt the children by pointing to different body parts. Challenge the children to think beyond physical health by pointing to the head and heart and asking: "What is a healthy child thinking?" and "What is a healthy child feeling?"

5. As children call out answers, use the opportunity to prompt discussion and address any early misunderstandings about physical and mental health. For example, does a healthy child feel good all of the time? A child might feel sad, but being sad does not make a child unhealthy. In fact, healthy children should experience a range of emotions. Likewise, if a child or young person has a long-term condition or disability, that doesn't mean they can't live happy, healthy lives and thrive. You can read more about the Social Model of Disability, if it's not something you're very familiar with, [here](#).