

2019

RESPIRA PROFUNDO 2.0 REPORT



CHICAGO COMMONS





2019 EXECUTIVE REPORT

The Respira Profundo 2.0 program was designed to engage more Pre-K students (3-5 year olds) and parents in deep breathing and meditation over the course of 12-weeks. It is also captured parental feedback and teachers and parent guardians how to use mindfulness techniques from the pilot program inside and outside of the classroom. The program was provided at the Nia Family Center.

Our initial program, Respira Profundo, launched in 2017. This program provided deep breathing, yoga, and stress management workshops for students.

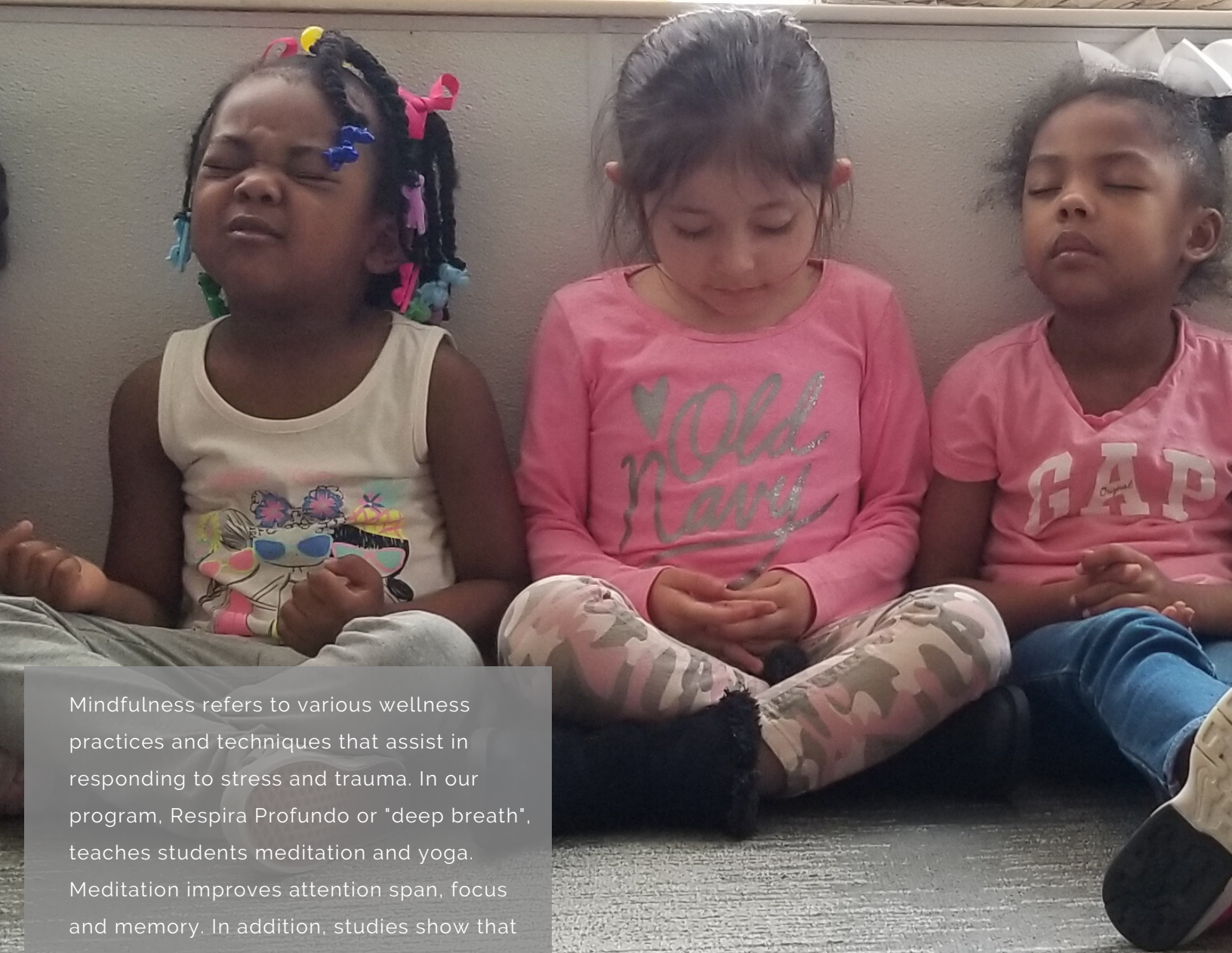
Both programs support our larger goal of providing sanctuary spaces for our students and families.

MEDITATION FACILITATOR

The Respira Program was designed by the African and Indigenous Knowledge Network (AIKN). AIKN works with families and school communities to provide ecosystems of healing-arts, indigenous education, and wellness across the world.

The AIKN network was founded by Elisha Hall. He has been a wellness practitioner for 15 years. He also produced this report.

PROGRAM REVIEW



Mindfulness refers to various wellness practices and techniques that assist in responding to stress and trauma. In our program, Respira Profundo or "deep breath", teaches students meditation and yoga. Meditation improves attention span, focus and memory. In addition, studies show that the effects from this practice can last long after the meditation takes place. It is extremely important that our most vulnerable populations feel safe. Meditation fosters a sense of calm, peace and balance while building armor against disruptive emotions and negativity.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Over 25 students and 8 parents participated in the program
- 5 Teachers and teachers aides were trained in meditation and children's yoga techniques
- Students in both classes mediated for 10 minutes and practiced yoga
- 4 students went home and taught their parent guardian how to meditate
- Students described themselves as, "calm", "good", and "relaxed" after meditation sessions
- Students are now self-initiating meditation during free time
- Parents were very interested and learned how to meditate and the importance of deep breathing and relieving stress
- Behavioral changes were also seen in the home

STUDENT PROGRESS

Students experienced many gains in the program. Students were more attentive for longer, they remember the steps of the yoga process, and were generally more relaxed.

90%

of students showed behavioral changes in the classroom due to meditation and yoga

100%

of classes that recieved the intervention are now using meditation in their classrooms

PROGRAM EFFICIENCY

While the program was only in two classrooms, both classrooms are now using meditation in during free time and cool-down time.



COMMENTS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Chicago Commons _Respira Profundo 2.0 Report, Sept. 2019

Teachers noticed major improvements in behavior after students began meditating. Before meditation, students were not using their words and were hitting. After students learned how to meditate, they were more calm and relaxed. In fact, a teacher said it was easier to explain to her students how they should use their words after students learned meditation.

Meditation also helped those with behavior issues by redirecting their energy and giving them tools to use. Moving forward, teachers would like to see opportunities where students and parents are meditating together in the classroom.

Students also gave a great deal of positive comments and feedback. When asked about how they felt after meditation, students used words like, "calm", "good", and "relaxed". They even meditated for 10 minutes and anticipated meditation sessions.

"The other teacher and I do it on a daily basis, and we also add it in on our lesson plan"
- Nia Teacher

Parents came to classes and told teachers that their child taught them meditation at home. In addition, 8 parents came to workshops and learned how to meditate, the benefits of meditation, and how to implement meditation at home.

2019-2020 NEXT STEPS



The general feedback from teachers is that this program should be expanded to all Chicago Common's sites through professional development and train-the-trainer opportunities. In addition, the next intervention should:

- Increase parent participation by hosting wellness events and posting meditation photos in the buildings
- Provide more professional development sessions for teachers

"I THINK THIS WOULD BE SOMETHING THAT ALL SITES AND ALL TEACHERS CAN IMPLEMENT IN THEIR CLASSROOM AND ON THEIR LESSON PLAN - BECAUSE THATS WHAT WE DO NOW" - NIA TEACHER

Finally, teachers were really glad to be able to meditate with students because it is also a time for them to meditate. Both teachers spoke to the value of meditating to reduce stress that teachers face in the classroom. More programs are needed that provide wrap-around services and supports to both students and teachers as we work to build a sanctuary of holistic support for our families.



