

How can mindfulness practices affect behaviour, well-being and engagement in the EYFS?

by Charlotte Speechly

Objective

To assess the effect of mindfulness practices on young children's behaviour and examine changes in children's overall well-being, including stress reduction, emotional resilience, happiness and engagement.

Methodology

My research used a mixed-methods approach to assess the impact of mindfulness practices and Positive Education on behaviour and kindness in early years settings. Quantitative data was gathered through paired observations and repeated measures, with correlation analysis exploring links between mindfulness and behavioural improvements. Qualitative data, collected from educators' journals, child conversations, and parent surveys, were analysed thematically to provide deeper insights into the intervention's effectiveness.

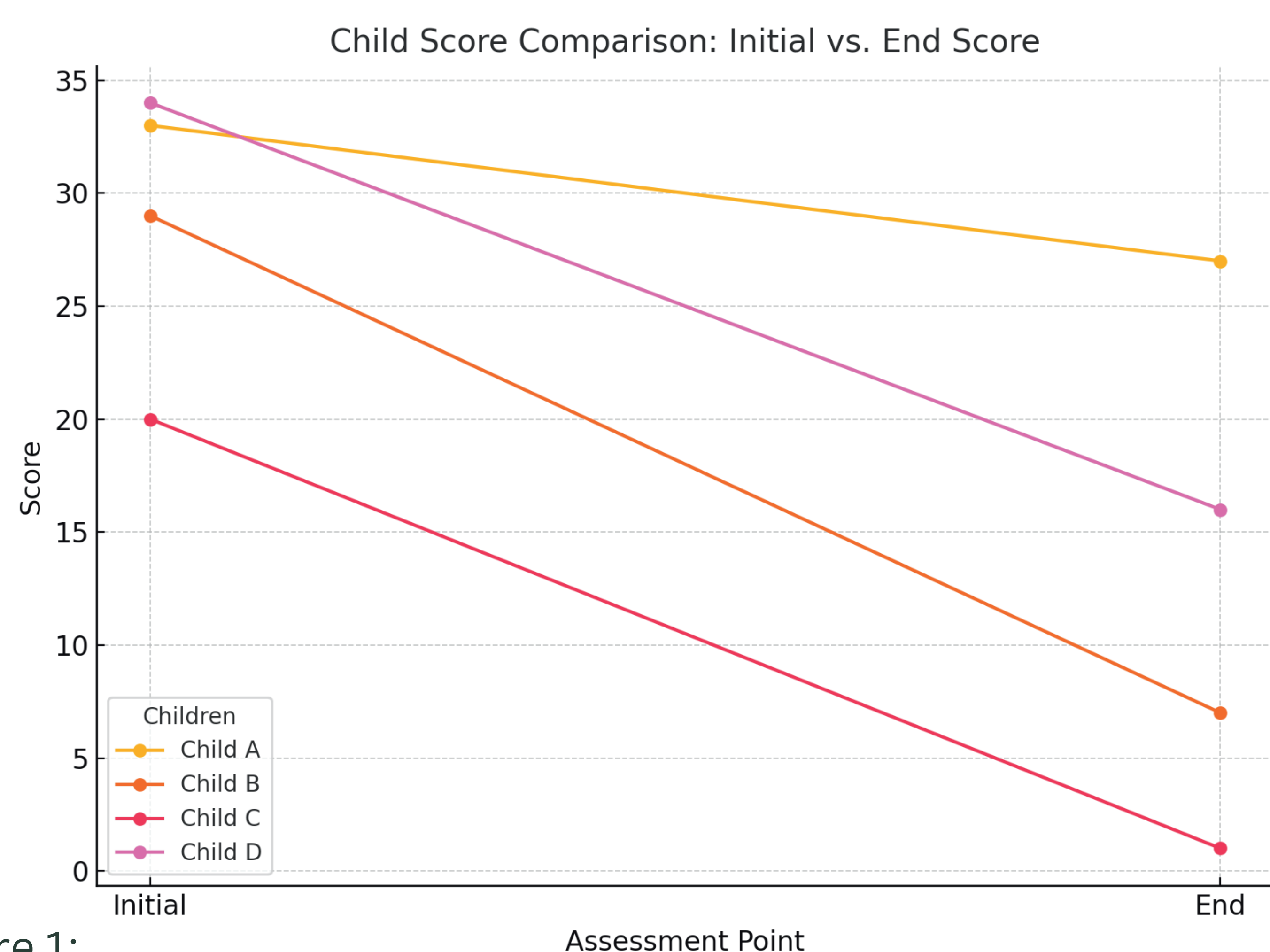


Figure 1:

Assessment Point

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Teacher: “The children are much more considerate of one another’s needs and now remind each other to use their ‘calm breathing’ when someone is upset.”

Parent: “I’ve noticed my child saying things like, ‘It’s okay, we can share,’ which they didn’t say before.”

Child: “When I feel mad, I do a big breath like we do in class, and it makes my tummy feel better.”

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Results

Figure 1 illustrates each child's score progression from the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ), where lower scores indicate better performance. Child A improved by 18.18% from the initial to the second score and maintained this progress. Child B demonstrated a significant improvement of 75.86% during the same period. Child C showed a remarkable improvement of 95.00%, while Child D improved by 52.94%.

Conclusion

The implementation of mindfulness practices significantly improved student behaviour, engagement, and well-being. Observations revealed increased kindness, emotional regulation, and cooperation among children, while feedback from educators and parents highlighted a calmer, more positive classroom environment. These findings demonstrate the effectiveness of mindfulness in fostering emotional growth and enhancing overall classroom dynamics.

Next step: Implement mindfulness practices in all classrooms.