

Why Yoga and Kids Go Together

Yoga is about exploring and learning in a fun, safe and playful way. Yoga and kids are a perfect match. Here is what children (and adults!) can learn from yoga:



- **Yoga teaches us about our bodies.**

When we practice the physical postures or exercises (called asanas), we learn how to move more freely and with greater ease and awareness. These postures help our bodies become strong and flexible.

- **Yoga teaches us how to breathe better.**

When we breathe deeply and fully (called pranayama) and become more aware, we can bring peacefulness or energy to our bodies.

- **Yoga teaches us how to use our energy more effectively.**

When we practice yoga, we learn how to use the life force energy in our bodies (called prana) to feel more relaxed, focused, or motivated.

- **Yoga teaches us how to quiet the mind.**

When we practice yoga, we learn how to be still. This helps us to listen with attention and make good decisions.

- **Yoga teaches us about balance.**

When we practice yoga, we learn to be more aware about the need for balance in our lives. This could mean equal stretching on the left and right sides of our bodies or making sure we balance our very busy time with equal quiet time and relaxation.

- **Yoga teaches us to be the "boss" of our bodies.**

Yoga teaches us to listen to our bodies by modifying or changing poses that are too hard or cause pain. (We will talk about how to modify poses in a later section.)

- **Yoga teaches us about taking care of ourselves.**

Yoga is a great way to move our bodies and feel healthy. And teaching children how to take care of themselves is one way to show love. As with all forms of exercise, a good yoga practice can mean a good night's sleep!

The beauty of yoga is that children can practice alone, with a friend or with a group. Many schools are now teaching yoga to young children, and there are many choices of after-school or weekend classes for kids and their families. Everyone can enjoy yoga – from tots to great-grandparents!

Professional organizations that focus on children also support the idea behind yoga. For example, The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and The National Association of the Education for Young Children (NAEYC) recommend that children should participate in activities that support the development of the whole child. This is exactly what yoga is about!