Yoga for the Youngest!
Mindfulness and Movement for Shifting Culture and Practice

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Getting Present

Mindfulness and Yoga Terminology

**Mindfulness**: moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and surrounding environment.

**Yoga**: a system of physical exercises or poses that build strength, flexibility and confidence.
Benefits of Mindfulness and Yoga

- • Mind-body connection
- • Fit and healthy lifestyle
- • Sense of well-being
- • Feeling of belonging
- • Fosters compassion
- • Reduce teacher stress
- • Create a community
- • Challenging behaviors
- • Optimal learning environment
- • Enhanced self-esteem
- • Feels better
- • Achieve goals
- • Reduced anger
- • Strong flexible body
- • Balance
- • Posture and alignment
- • Core strength
- • Digestion & circulation
- • Better sleep
- • Boosts immunity
- • Imagination and creativity
- • Reduce stress and anxiety
- • Balance energy, high, low
- • Calm the mind, settle the body
- • Character development
- • Reduces anger
- • Optimal learning environment
- • Enhances relationships

Self-regulation

- • When young children effectively manage their thoughts, feelings and actions through self-regulation they experience positive social outcomes.
- • The ability to shift attention, follow directions and persist in challenging tasks is considered critically important for young children’s school success.
- • The use of classroom-based yoga programs is an effective way of supporting young children’s learning, promote positive behavior and nurture self-regulation.
- • Yoga practice provides young children important opportunities to integrate physical, mental and spiritual development using poses, breath control and relaxation techniques.
- • By stretching and breathing children learn how to focus internally, growing their self-awareness about their bodies and their breath.


Poll Question:
Do you practice mindfulness or yoga?
Bringing Yoga and Mindfulness to Children

Start with your practice
Gain knowledge and develop your own practice and remember it's a practice
- Start meditation/yoga for short time
- Incorporate it into another daily habit
- Keep it simple and easy to follow
- Experiment. Get curious!
- Let go of outcomes attach to the process

With the children
Develop intentions (objectives)
- For example:
  1. To develop strong, flexible, healthy bodies
  2. To increase awareness of body and breath

Develop a lot of questions that the children would like to investigate
- For example:
  1. What is yoga?
  2. Can everyone do yoga?

Create the environment and establish a daily practice
- Peaceful, supportive, calm, outdoor, indoor
- Keep it simple, and small.
- Determine best times to practice (circle time, before breakfast, before rest time, after rest time)
- Do it daily!

Mindfulness and Yoga: Birth-Age Eight
Adapt yoga practices to fit your children's developmental characteristics as well as their interests and curiosities. Adapt the poses so you focus on the cultivation of compassion and connection between breath and posture rather than the perfection of the pose.

Video
Resources


Mindfulness and Yoga: A Community-Building Practice

Why culture is important?

Mindfulness tools and practices, without residing in a culture of mindfulness will be valuable, but much less transformative when they exist outside of a larger culture of mindfulness.
Leadership style: shifting toward a culture of mindfulness takes a leadership style that is nurturing and enhancing.

Leadership role: enhance the continual learning and ongoing refinement of mindfulness so it is increasingly internalized by teachers, staff members and children.

Leadership practices (three of many):
- Intentionally dedicate time and space to nurture mindfulness in self and others
- Co-construct a shared vision and practice of mindfulness
- Coach for mindfulness, inviting ongoing reflection and shared learning

Intentionally dedicate time and space

How we view and decide to use time is key
> time is a resource that we can give as a gift to the endeavors and people we believe in
> time can be created from squandered time
> when we spend time with others, we create synergy

> it is essential to reserve time for ourselves

Mindful life balance in ourselves and others
Dedicating time at school:
- silent meditation
- breathing exercises
- stretching
- healthy snack
- walk around school ground
- brain compatible music

Add mindfulness to your day in only 10-15 minutes:

- Start your day with a brief deep breath meditation.
- Relax at the end of the day with a guided meditation.
- Take a break to check in with your breathing.
- In a brief team setting, identify an aspect of agreed-on importance.

Co-construct a shared vision that...
- evokes trusting mindful relationships
- leads to practical intentions and actions to realize the vision
Coach for mindfulness and shared learning
> coaching enables educational innovations to achieve their full potential
> when coaching is added to mindfulness, it is more likely to be internalized, valued and practiced
> social interaction → new concepts and practices

Listen to one another with curiosity
Mindfulness IS
> the openness to new information and different points of view
> playful and nimble and avoids the traps of narrow definitions
> intentionally searching for and noticing of the new and the different

Keep in mind the present you are constructing. It should be the future that you want. ~ Alice Walker
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Send us a message.
Let us know how mindfulness and yoga are growing in your early learning context.
Let us know how we can help.
We’d love to hear from you!