

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

Jenna Augustine, M.A. & Lori Ryan, Ph. D.

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## Getting Present



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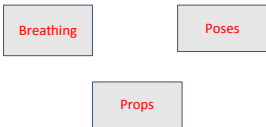
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## Mindfulness and Yoga Terminology

**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.



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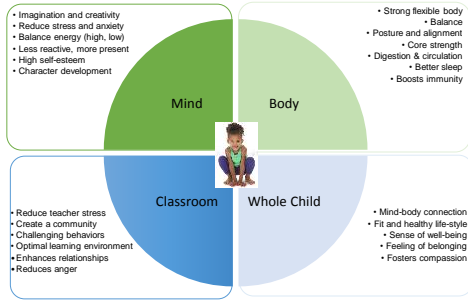
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Benefits of Mindfulness and Yoga




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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.

Razza, R. A., Bergen-Cico, D., & Raymond, K. (2013). Enhancing Preschoolers’ Self-Regulation Via Mindful Yoga. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 24(2), 372-385.

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Poll Question:  
Do you practice  
mindfulness or yoga?

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### 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 list 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!

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### Video




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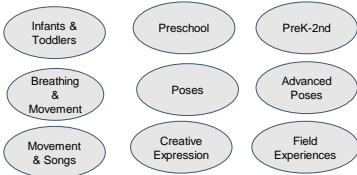
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### Mindfulness and Yoga: Birth-Age Eight

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.




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## Resources

1. Purperhart, H. (2008). *The Yoga Zoo Adventure: Animal Poses and Games for Little Kids*. Alameda, CA: Hunter House.
2. Bersma, D., & Visscher, M. (2003). *Yoga Games for Children: Fun and Fitness with Postures, Movements, and Breath*. Alameda, CA: Hunter House.
3. Razza, R. A., Raymond, K., & Bergen-Cico, D. (2013, October 15). Enhancing Preschooler's Self Regulation Via Mindful Yoga.
4. Anderson, E. M., Edd. (2014). International Journal of Yoga Therapy. *Issues in Yoga Therapy*, 24.
5. Hoy, W. K., Gage, C. O., & Tarter, J. (2006). School Mindfulness and Faculty Trust: Necessary Conditions for Each Other? *Educational Administration Quarterly*.
6. Kim, K. J., Wee, S., Gilbert, B. B., & Choi, J. (2016, October 27). Young Children's Physical and Psychological Well-Being Through Yoga. *Childhood Education*, 437-445.
7. Zelazo, P. D., & Lyons, K. E. (2012). The Potential Benefits of Mindfulness Training in Early Childhood: A Developmental Social Cognitive Neuroscience Perspective. *Child Development Perspectives*, 6(2), 154-160.
8. Yoga Calm: <http://www.yogacalm.org>
9. Yoga Ed: <https://yogaed.com>

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## Mindfulness and Yoga: A Community-Building Practice




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## 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.

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**Leadership style:** shifting toward a culture of mindfulness takes a leadership style that is nurturing and enhancing



Hoy, W.K. et. al (2006). School Mindfulness and Faculty Trust: Necessary Conditions for Each Other? *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42, 236.

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



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**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

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### 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

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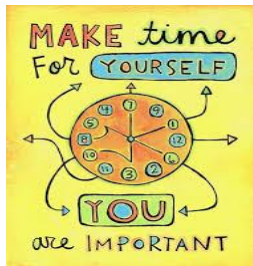
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> it is essential to reserve time for ourselves




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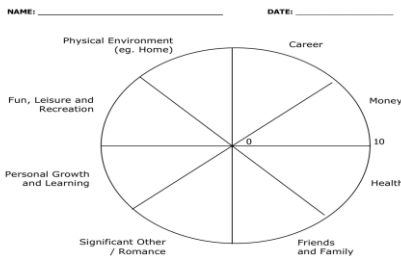
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### Mindful life balance in ourselves and others




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### Dedicating time at

- > silent meditation
- > breathing exercises
- > stretching
- > healthy snack
- > walk around school ground
- > brain compatible music




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

Here are 4 ways to add mindfulness to your schedule, each way only takes 10-15 minutes of your time:

\*Remember, consistency is key.

Created and presented by  
Harvard Health Publications.

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### Co-construct a shared vision that...

- > evokes trusting mindful relationships
- > leads to practical intentions and actions to realize the vision




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### 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




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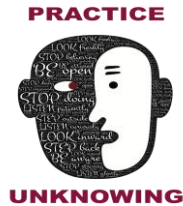
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### Listen to one another with curiosity

- 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




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Keep in mind the present you are constructing. It should be the future that you want. ~ Alice Walker




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## Stay connected with us

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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!*

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