

Kids' Yoga Guide: Tips and Strategies for Parents and Teachers



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Get more tips to introduce kids to yoga with [The ABCs of Yoga for Kids: A Guide for Parents & Teachers](#).
Plus, discover even more books and resources at [ABCYogaforKids.com](#) and
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WHY YOGA FOR KIDS?

Children gain significant mental and physical health benefits from practicing simple yoga poses. Today's kids are faced with over-stimulation as they strive to keep up with the fast-paced demands of our society, and introducing yoga to them is the ideal way for children to naturally unwind and obtain physical activity at the same time.

The list of benefits of yoga are many, including:

- Increasing focus and concentration
- Building balance and flexibility
- Enhancing school performance
- Developing discipline
- Increasing coordination and strength
- Helping with the performance of other sport activities
- Strengthening both fine and gross motor coordination
- Improving visual-motor and auditory processing
- Toning internal glands and organs
- Promoting calmness and easing stress
- Helping with cognitive functions of sequencing and memory
- Heightening body awareness and self-control

Indeed, yoga nourishes the mind, body, and spirit, and paves the way for a life-long tradition of health and fitness. Yoga is a non-competitive form of exercise, suitable for children of all ages and sizes and varying degrees of athletic abilities.



TIPS FOR PARENTS

Kids and parents shouldn't eat a heavy meal right before doing yoga. Many poses twist across digestive organs and discomfort can occur if the stomach is full.

Pick a quiet place to practice, preferable on a yoga mat, beach towel or soft carpet.

It helps to do the poses with kids, but isn't necessary. You are a big influence when changing your child's behavior, and yoga is a great way for families to do something healthy together; however, just introducing yoga can have a tremendous impact.

Try to be in the moment when doing yoga with kids, instead of letting your mind wander to things that need to get done.

Have children focus on breathing in and out through their nose in the yoga poses.

Keep the tone light and fun, and never push children to do more than they are capable of.

Offer positive reinforcement, which helps kids learn, improve and gain confidence.

Try not to adjust the kids in the poses. The goal is not to do the 'perfect pose'; rather it is for children to feel his or her own body in the postures.

Anywhere from 8 to 15 seconds is a good time frame for holding poses initially.

There is no magic number of poses or time limit for yoga. Start with 15 minutes and build up to ½ hour; however, even 5 minutes of yoga can go a long way towards establishing a routine of healthy physical activity.

Try to end with DO NOTHING Pose to let kids unwind. Simply lie on your back with your arms alongside your body and your palms facing the ceiling. If you have an eye pillow or small towel to cover your eyes, it helps keep the light out.



Consider playing a soothing children's lullaby such as "House at Pooh Corner" by Kenny Loggins or "Puff the Magic Dragon" by Peter, Paul and Mary, when ending in Do Nothing Pose.

It is the journey, not the destination, that counts when encouraging children to start a yoga practice. By spending time doing yoga together, you are planting the seeds for a lifelong interest in yoga and its many health and mind-body connection benefits.

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TIPS FOR TEACHERS

The secret to motivate kids to take up yoga is to make it fun! For example, use plastic food and plates to “set” each child’s “table” in TABLE Pose. Hold each pose for 8 to 15 seconds.



Encourage students to express creativity and imagination while practicing yoga. If an activity is fun, their bodies will simply let go spontaneously, and naturally unwind while assuming the different yoga positions.

Although it's great to do the poses *with* the kids, it is not necessary. Simply introducing basic yoga postures to the children goes a long way towards helping them find a way to quiet their minds, while getting physical activity.

Determine a time to practice yoga with kids either on a daily basis, or at least once a week. Consistency is important for young children and they thrive on routines.

Try including games, songs, yoga poses and yoga books in your daily lesson plans. Ideas include:

Simon Says – Try playing classic game, yoga-style! For instance, instruct the children to get into FROG pose. Then say “SIMON SAYS jump up twice and say ribbit.” The next time say, “Jump up twice” and see if you can trick them. This is also a great way to work on their listening skills



Sing “Row Row Row Your Boat” and have kids practice BOAT pose while singing.

Introduce COW pose when studying farm animals.



Read **The Rainbow Fish** by Marcus Pfister to discuss friendship and practice FISH pose.



Set up developmental learning centers that incorporate yoga, such as a writing table. Have blank paper and crayons and encourage kids to draw themselves in a yoga pose or make up a new pose.

Little ones have short attention spans and thus you need to be flexible when introducing them to yoga. Keep the tone light and fun to create a lifelong interest in yoga for kids. Even just five minutes a day can make a difference!

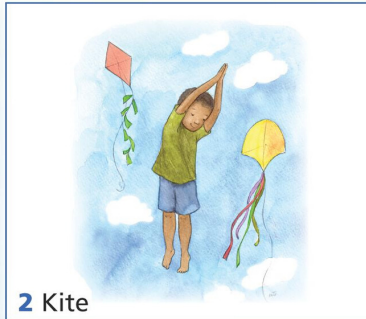
SAMPLE 5-MINUTE YOGA ROUTINE, WITH STANDING POSES

KIDS' YOGA DAY

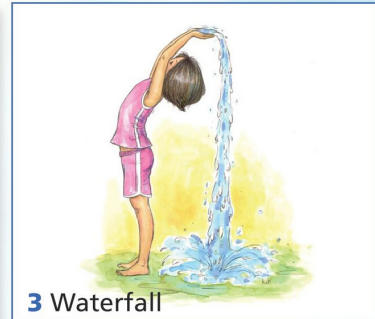
5-MINUTE-A-DAY YOGA ROUTINE with  STANDING POSES



1 Queen



2 Kite



3 Waterfall



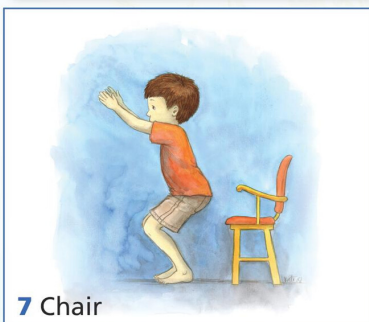
4 Rag Doll



5 Windmill



6 Y Pose (Yoga)



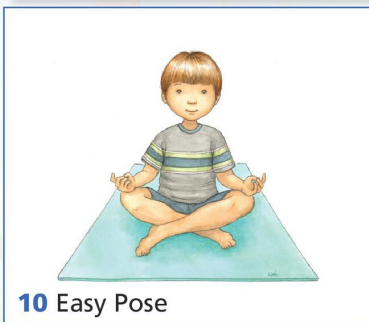
7 Chair



8 Flamingo



9 Tree



10 Easy Pose



This routine is by **Teresa Power**, acclaimed yoga expert, creator of the *ABCs of Yoga for Kids* series, founder of **Kids' Yoga Day**. For instructions on how to do each pose, visit abcyogaforkids.com/backtoschool. As always, before beginning any type of exercise program, it's a good idea to consult with a doctor.

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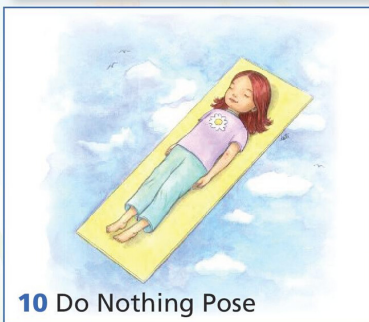
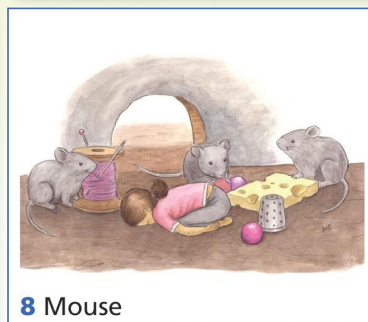
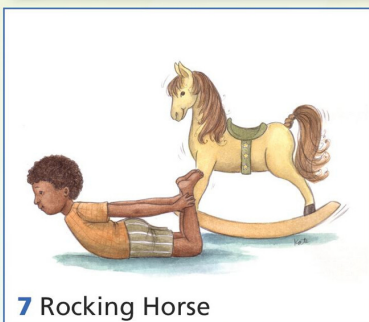
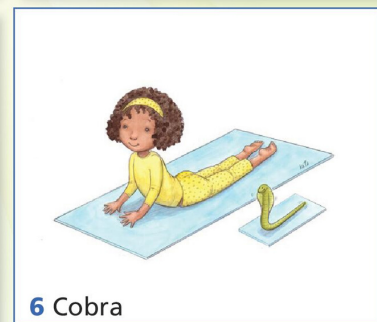
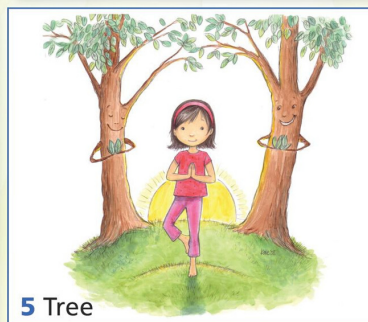
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Learn more about how you can take part in the biggest day in kids' yoga each year at kidsyogaday.com, created by Teresa Power!

SAMPLE 5-MINUTE YOGA ROUTINE, WITH SITTING & STANDING POSES

KIDS' YOGA DAY

5-MINUTE-A-DAY YOGA ROUTINE with  and  poses



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