



Pre-School Curriculum





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Our Mission

Yoga Ed. develops and produces health/wellness programs, trainings, and products for teachers, parents, children and health professionals, that improve academic achievement, physical fitness, emotional intelligence and stress management.

Medical Disclaimer:

Not all exercises are suitable for everyone and it is recommended that you consult your doctor before beginning this or any exercise program. To reduce the risk of injury, never force or strain or attempt these exercises without the assistance of a trained yoga or PE instructor. If you experience pain or discomfort during this exercise, stop immediately and consult your doctor. The instruction presented is in no way intended as a substitute for medical advice.



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Program Overview

Pre-School

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

I. Introduction:

The Yoga Ed. Curriculum for Pre-School is an educational program that combines an experiential exploration of the body, mind and the self with the exercise system of yoga to support and enhance the health, development and learning of young children. Yoga Education at this age serves to help children be learning-ready, physically fit, aware of self and others, and to develop coordination and confidence. In the following 36-week program, the practice of yoga is integrated with playful and age-appropriate physical and mental activities designed to support the whole child and lay a foundation of health on all levels - physical, mental, emotional and social. Students will expand their awareness and self-control while nurturing their self-esteem as they learn how to move gracefully, breathe smoothly and deeply, and sustain their focus and concentration. The Yoga Ed. program develops strength, flexibility, balance, mental clarity, emotional stability, compassion and teamwork.

Why Yoga:

Yoga means 'union' or 'link.' Hatha Yoga is a system of physical exercise which studies and integrates the mind, body and breath. The benefits of this ancient discipline include enhanced physical, mental and emotional health. The practices and exercises of yoga develop the ability to sustain smooth and deep breathing, while moving the body and maintaining a variety of challenging postures. The postures are designed to strengthen, align and balance the body. The breathing quiets the mind, and soothes the nervous system. The yoga process of linking or unifying thought, breath and movement develops focus, concentration, and an awareness of the fundamental connection between intention, action and consequence. The cultivation of this kind of personal integration deepens one's relationship to and respect for oneself, others and life on all levels. The focus of the Yoga Ed. Program is the transference of yoga skills into personal awareness and into tools for dealing with life and making healthy, responsible choices.

Mission:

Yoga Ed. develops and produces health/wellness programs, trainings and products for teachers, parents, children and health professionals that improve academic achievement, physical fitness, emotional intelligence and stress management.

Philosophy:

The Socratic method of teaching as applied by John Dewey informs the Yoga Ed. Program. This philosophy is based on the belief that children want to learn and are innately motivated to do so when they feel safe, supported and appropriately stimulated. It is further believed that there must be an awareness and understanding of one's own thinking process in order to have truly learned. In this definition of learning, new knowledge becomes a tool with which a child can be uniquely and continually creative.

Through the practice of yoga and the involvement in many imaginative and sensory rich activities and explorations, young students naturally develop a greater understanding of their bodies and their thinking, as well as the relationship between physical and mental states. They learn to distinguish and identify feelings, thoughts and actions and understand that they have choices for their behavior. Even in the playful, age-appropriate process of building strength, alignment, balance, flexibility and coordination at the pre-school level, young children develop focus, determination and finesse. As they start to learn how to play with and navigate obstacles and challenges, they cultivate confidence, resilience, courage and tolerance. These valuable qualities are the benefits of the yoga process, and become lifetime tools for wellness.

To support children in their intrinsic drive to acquire knowledge, skills and proficiency, the Yoga Ed. Program is structured for active learning. Students are inspired by poses, taught concepts and information, and are offered instruction in order to achieve those poses. While receiving instruction, students are guided in their explorations and asked to reflect on their outcomes. The results of this reflection process will be an awareness of personal tools with which to progress in yoga, and which can be applied to achievement and problem solving in life.

II. Goals & Objectives:

Concepts:

These are the beliefs that inform the program philosophy:

1. We are each a whole, unique and precious being, deserving of understanding and respect.
2. We are all always doing the best that our current awareness and abilities allow.
3. We are each ever growing and learning.
4. We are all connected to a greater community; our actions make a difference and impact others.
5. We are responsible for our own lives. We can all maintain a lifetime of health and learning through the pursuit of self-knowledge, self-management and self-care.
6. Educators and educational institutions are creators and facilitators of safe and stimulating environments and structures in which experiential learning can take place for each individual.

Goals:

1. To inspire students to establish and maintain a lifetime of wellness.
2. To provide the tools to develop self-awareness and enhance social, physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.
3. To develop focus and concentration in order to enhance learning and achievement.
4. To support children in finding enjoyment and success in physical activities.
5. To facilitate the transference of yoga skills and outcomes to other academic and social situations and environments.

Objectives: Yoga Skills

1. Ability to apply basic body mechanics, alignment and proper posture.
2. Ability to move gracefully, stretch and hold physical postures.
3. Ability to center, integrate and balance oneself.
4. Ability to understand and regulate breathing in challenging situations.
5. Ability to focus and concentrate on a given task.
6. Ability to slow down and connect with one's inner self.
7. Ability to balance effort and receptivity, incorporating finesse.
8. Ability to relax and release tension.
9. Ability to maintain and improve cardiovascular fitness and health.
10. Ability to utilize specific techniques to manage emotions, transitions and stresses.
11. Ability to formulate and accomplish a self-created goal.
12. Ability to observe, identify, accept and work with thoughts and feelings.
13. Ability to make positive choices that respect and support oneself and others.
14. Ability to tolerate conflicts and creatively and compassionately problem-solve to resolve them.

Outcomes:

Physical Fitness:

- Kinesthetic awareness and control
- Strength and flexibility
- Balance and coordination
- Cardiovascular and circulatory health
- Relaxation and renewal

Mental Fitness:

- Focus and concentration
- Development of visual, auditory and kinesthetic intelligences
- Critical thinking and creativity
- Perseverance and confidence
- Respect and tolerance

Emotional Fitness:

- Awareness and understanding of feelings
- Appropriate processing and expression of feelings
- Self-esteem and awareness of choices
- Stability and self-control
- Supportive self-care and stress management

Social Fitness:

- Personal responsibility
- Understanding of one's impact and contributions
- Respect for different perspectives and for the greater community
- Communication and conflict-resolution skills

The Importance of Integrative Movement

Carla Hannaford, Ph.D. demonstrates in her book **Smart Moves: Why Learning is Not All In Your Head**, the importance of slow, integrative, coherent movement such as yoga in order to support full brain function and a child's maximum learning potential. Her research illustrates that rich movement and sensory activities are crucial to the development of a healthy child with a learning ready brain because they produce:

- A fully developed vestibular system
- A fully developed proprioceptive system (body's sense of itself in space)
- An awareness and development of the senses
- Emotional awareness and intelligence
- A sense of connectedness to others

The playful kinesthetic and yoga-based exercises developed by Yoga Ed. for pre-school are designed to develop the vestibular and proprioceptive systems and to provide an environment in which kinesthetic, sensorial, emotional, and social intelligence is cultivated. The use of the Yoga Ed. Curriculum enhances young children's health and growth in body, mind and heart by supporting brain-based learning and the preschooler's natural need to explore, observe, imitate, manipulate, and master their world via movement and play.

Physical Education Standards:

There are no national or state standards for physical education for pre-school in the United States. The Yoga Ed. Pre-school Curriculum is based on the same format as the Yoga Ed. K-8 Curriculum, which is in alignment with the national Challenge Physical Education Standards. The three Units of the Yoga Ed. Program correlate to the three categories of standards for Physical Education:

Unit One: Body = movement development / understanding of physical body

Unit Two: Mind = personal development / understanding of thoughts, attitudes

Unit Three: Self = social development / understanding of self within the context of community both historically and culturally.

The following outline demonstrates how the Yoga Ed. Program meets and develops all seven of the Challenge Physical Education Standards specifically:

Movement Skills and Movement Knowledge:

Standard 1: The student will be competent in many movement activities

1. **Poses:** Students hold as well as flow through forward bending, back bending, twisting, balancing and inverted postures.
2. **Games:** Students apply learned and created movements in fun and individual ways.
3. **Partner Poses:** Students work together in new movement challenges of trust, balance and coordination
4. **Rest and Visualization:** Students learn how not to move and to balance activity with passivity by allowing their bodies and minds to rest and recharge.

Standard 2: The student will understand how and why one moves in a variety of situations and will use this information to enhance his or her skill.

1. **Time-In:** Students learn how to be still, quiet and focused, deeply resting the body and mind, and enhancing calm, balance, attention and clarity.
2. **Discussion:** Students receive information and create a context for the purpose, value and benefits of movement participation.
3. **Poses:** Students learn how to use poses as tools for self-care and how to deepen and improve the poses through applying information and coaching and receiving adjustments.
4. **Games:** Students learn to improve at games through applying information and coaching.
5. **Partner Poses:** Students develop their ability to work together to perform and improve partner poses.
6. **Class Projects:** By reflecting on their experience, students develop an awareness and understanding of their process and how to improve it.
7. **Rest and Visualization:** Students experience the value of conscious relaxation to enhance health, skills, behavior and creativity.

Standard 3: The student will achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.

1. **Time-In:** Students learn how to use this quiet time to support inner balance and health, focus and concentration.
2. **Discussion:** Students receive information and create personal goals for fitness.

3. **Poses:** Students learn how to use poses as tools for self-care and how to deepen and improve the poses through applying information and coaching and receiving adjustments.
4. **Games:** Students learn to maintain health through movement, fun and laughter.
5. **Partner Poses:** Students develop their ability to work together to enhance health and fitness.
6. **Class Projects:** Students choose ways to enhance and maintain health and fitness through participation in personal assessments and creative projects.
7. **Rest and Visualization:** Students balance exertion and rest, integrating information and experiences and developing their imagination and creativity.

Self-Image and Personal Development:

Standard 4: The student will exhibit a physically active lifestyle and will understand that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge and self-expression.

1. **Time-In:** Students develop greater awareness of themselves: how they feel and why; they also gain clarity about which life choices support them and which activities they truly enjoy.
2. **Discussion:** Students receive information about how yoga can help them improve in other physical activities.
3. **Poses:** Students develop a non-competitive, personally appropriate practice as they develop greater awareness of the effects of their physical and mental activity during yoga.
4. **Games:** Students have opportunity to design and express themselves through other ways of moving and playing.
5. **Partner Poses:** Students learn to trust each other and cooperate while sharing the challenge and enjoyment of working together creatively.
6. **Class Projects:** Students design and complete creative projects both individually and as a group that support achieving their own goals and expanding their understanding of the challenges and benefits of physical activity and fitness.
7. **Rest and Visualization:** Students learn to release stress physically and mentally as well as to use imagination to improve performance and progress towards goals.

Standard 5: The student will demonstrate responsible personal behavior while participating in movement activities.

1. **Time-In:** Students practice self-control and self-reflection by remaining still and quiet.

2. **Discussion:** Students practice sharing and respecting their own ideas as well as listening to others.
3. **Poses:** Students learn through personal experience what behavior is safe and appropriate for them during yoga.
4. **Games:** Students understand and practice being safe and cooperative while contributing to group play. Students also learn to work through problems or conflicts independently without teacher supervision.
5. **Partner Poses:** Students understand and practice individually how to safely and cooperatively work with others.
6. **Class Projects:** Students understand and practice how to contribute to a team/group effort while working on a project.
7. **Rest and Visualization:** Students are able to fully relax themselves and enjoy just being without doing anything.

Social Development:

Standard 6: The student will demonstrate responsible social behavior while participating in movement activities. The student will understand the importance of respect for all others.

1. **Time-In:** Students practice respecting others by remaining still and quiet
2. **Discussion:** Students practice listening, taking turns and participating respectfully
3. **Poses:** Students learn what behavior is safe and unsafe for others during yoga and follow those rules of safety.
4. **Games:** Students practice moving and playing safely and cooperatively and learn to work through problems or conflicts with each other.
5. **Partner Poses:** Students practice team-building with each other while moving, playing and communicating independently, safely and cooperatively
6. **Class Projects:** Students practice working together, supporting each other and building teamwork around a project.
7. **Rest and Visualization:** Students are able to respect others' personal space and creativity.

Standard 7: The student will understand the inter-relation between history, culture and games, sports, play and dance.

1. **Time-In:** Students try different forms of personal reflection and ways to cultivate concentration that have evolved throughout history and cultures.
2. **Discussion:** Students share their growing understanding of the similarities and differences between yoga and other exercise.
3. **Poses:** Students learn how yoga movements are the basis of many other physical disciplines and how they can use what they learn in yoga to help most other movement activities.

4. **Games:** Students experience the influence of different backgrounds as they share and create their own games.
5. **Class Projects:** Cross-curricular projects between yoga and other areas of study are encouraged for each grade.

Organization of Material:

The Yoga Ed. Program maps an introductory yoga program for the pre-school level. It assumes that all students take yoga once a week, and are new to yoga. It also presumes that the instructors have undertaken a yoga teacher training and have experience teaching kids, or a Yoga Ed. Teacher Certification.

Units One, Two and Three are each 12 weeks long. All lessons are two weeks long. The program covers a lot of material and could easily be used for more than one school year. Since the study of yoga deepens with practice and repetition, the **LESSON PLANS** presented here can be returned to again and again, as well as used in part or divided into several classes. Students will naturally relate to the information, tools and yoga at deeper and more sophisticated levels as they develop.

The **TEACHER'S GUIDE** addresses the issues of class structure, components, management and teaching strategies. **Yoga Ed. Breathing, Yoga Ed. Warm-Ups, Yoga Ed. Yoga Poses, Yoga Ed. Games, and Yoga Ed. Rest and Visualization** are reference books for the activities noted in italics in the lesson plans.

The Lesson Plans are organized into three units. Each unit is a focused exploration initiated by a question. Students are asked questions and guided in their inquiry via a variety of components in order to learn through experience.

The focus of these lesson plans is physical awareness and skills via movement and play. This leads to the development of body and kinesthetic sense, spatial and environmental awareness, movement coordination, attention span, awareness of breath, strength, flexibility, balance, coordination, and grace.

Unit One: BODY

What is Yoga? Why do we practice yoga?

The objective is to create a meaningful context for understanding yoga and why it is beneficial to health. This unit of study introduces basic information on the body and how it functions. It is also an exploration of and training in the physical components of yoga: breathing, synchronized breath and movement, alignment, focus, concentration, effort, relaxation, finesse, balance, flexibility and equanimity.

Unit Two: MIND

How do I practice Yoga? What happens when I do yoga?

This unit shifts the inquiry to the student's experience of doing yoga. The focus is on making personal connections regarding the impact and effects of the practice on thoughts, feelings and energy. Students are guided in expanding their awareness of themselves before, during and after yoga.

Unit Three: SELF

What have I learned from yoga? How can I apply these skills in other situations?

This unit asks students to connect their observations of the yoga practice to themselves and their lives. By understanding how poses and practices affect them, they can make informed choices about their own practice and apply yoga skills to other areas of their lives. Students develop greater awareness of their thinking and behavior patterns and practice using yoga tools to support them in conscious choice making.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

UNIT ONE: BODY

Lesson 1: Intro: What is yoga?

Lesson 2: Body Parts

Lesson 3: Balance

Lesson 4: Shape

Lesson 5: Direction

Lesson 6: Finesse

UNIT TWO: MIND

Lesson 1: Observation

Lesson 2: Speed/Pace

Lesson 3: Emotions

Lesson 4: Flow

Lesson 5: Energy

Lesson 6: Choices

UNIT THREE: SELF

Lesson 1: Place

Lesson 2: Relationship

Lesson 3: Opposites

Lesson 4: Parts of a Whole

Lesson 5: Partners

Lesson 6: Teamwork