

Yoga Poses for Children

Week One: Energized to Calm Sequence

SHAKE LIKE JELLO

Song Ideas: Stretching Song, any song with a rhythmic drumming beat

Beginning with your head, use your fingers to rub the top of your head, then move to the sides and back, imagining that you are relaxing the muscles there. Then imagine that there are imaginary strings on the base of your jaw and untie your mandible joint to loosen your jaw up. Untie your neck by rolling your head slowing one way, and then the other. Untie your shoulders by moving them up and down, rolling them forward, then back. Move down from your neck to your back, your arms (elbows, wrists, hands), waist, legs (thighs, knees, ankles and feet). Untie all your knots until you are rid of all your aches and pains. Massage your muscles until they feel relaxed and loose. Now SHAKE!!! Shake like jelly or jell-o. Shake all over, every part of your body. Now that you are all untied and shaken loose hang out into a forward bend. Breathe in and feel your body becoming lighter, breathe out and bend forward. Loosen your neck and spine. Let your arms hang down. Come up slowly placing your hands on your tailbone and inching your fingers up your spine.

Benefits: Daily practice of appropriate ways to move, jiggle and wiggle can help reduce physical and mental symptoms of stress. Kids who need this will find ways to release this energy one way or another, so, why not give them the opportunity! This is also a nice activity to use when you see the children's or a child's attention wandering during the day, it can help them re-energize and redirect their attention. It can be practiced standing up or at a table.

REACH FOR THE SUN

Song Ideas: Here Comes the Sun-Beatles, Mr. Sun-Mr. Dave

Begin in open mountain pose. Stand tall and straight with your feet together or slightly parted. Place your arms at your side with your palms facing your legs. Stretch your fingers toward the floor. Draw your shoulders back and tighten your knees and elbows. Look straight ahead. Stand firm and tall like a mountain with equal weight on both feet. Breathe in lift one of your arms, reaching your hand up high toward the sky. Imagine that you are grabbing a piece of sunshine and pull the power in to your solar plexus (the area near your sternum). Exhale with a "hah" breath. Repeat with the other arm. Continue the pose and alternate arms as you go. Feel the power of the sun shining in you.

Benefits: This pose can energize and empower children. It helps them gain control over their movements and voices. At the same time, it is rhythmic and therefore it can also

bring about a calm, yet alert state. Try pairing with affirmations like, "I shine like the sun," or "My light shines bright!"

VOLCANO

Sit in a chair or stand up. Place your palms together at your heart center (Namaste pose). Breathe in as you watch your hands rise up over your head. Breathe out as you explode your arms outward. Make big, blasting volcano noises. Lower your arms to your sides and return your hands to the Namaste position. Repeat the sequence several times, erupting like a volcano.

Benefits: Children learn they can manage and blow away anger, frustration and yucky feelings by exploding in this noisy pose. It provides a way for children to release anger in peaceful ways.

DOWN DOG

Song Ideas: Who Let the Dogs Out (kids' version), Upside down-Jack Johnson

Begin on all fours. Curl your toes under and spread your fingers like big paws. Lift your hips and tail to the sky. Lengthen your spine, arms and legs as long as possible. Make doggy sounds (bark, pant, and whine). Let your head hang down and relax. Lift one leg and imagine you are wagging your tail, now try the other leg!

Benefits: This pose helps build strength in the arms, legs and spine. It can also be energizing, and children find it fun to bark and different volumes. When you have an active group, it can be a nice outlet for their energy.

SNAKE/COBRA

Song Ideas: Songs with a slow recorder music.



Lie on your belly. Gently squeeze your legs together. Make your body long and strong like a snake. Place your hands under your shoulders. Inhale. Pull your shoulders down away from your ears. Lift your chest... higher and higher. Slither out of your skin and lower back. Exhale as you hiss the s sound of the snake. Ssssss. Stick out your tongue. Flick it too. Rest. Inhale. Snake up again.

Benefits: Cobra is one of the children's favorites. Practicing this pose will keep the spine and lower back flexible.

CHILD'S POSE

Song Ideas: Own Two Hands-Jack Johnson

Begin by sitting on your heels. Separate your knees so your belly relaxes between your thighs. Bend at the hips and fold forward, letting your shoulders drop down, away from your ears and spine. Let your arms lie back along the sides of your legs with open palms facing upwards. Or reach your arms out in front of you, palms down. Place your forehead on the floor and rest. You can also make two fists, stack them one on top of the other and rest your forehead on top of your fists.

Benefits: Use this pose to calm and quiet excited, anxious or highly energetic children. This pose also provides pressure to many points in the body and can help children feel safe.

Presented by:
Lisa Hoeme, MS, LPC
Certified Yogakids Facilitator

Adapted from: The Yogakids Toolbox, Tools for School, Marsha Wenig, www.yogakids.com