

Yoga Ed.™

K-8 Curriculum

*As developed at The Accelerated School,
Los Angeles, California*

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OVERVIEW

Introduction:

Yoga Ed. is an educational program that combines a science-based exploration of the body, mind and self with the exercise system of yoga to support and enhance learning, health and personal responsibility. Yoga Ed. serves to help children be learning ready, physically fit, aware of self and others and confident. In the following 36-week program, the practice of yoga (defined here as a methodology for integrating movement and breath to strengthen, align and balance the body, focus the mind and soothe and recharge the nervous system) is informed by a study of the body's systems, the mind-body interface and the impact and consequences of one's behavior choices. Students will learn how to move gracefully, breathe smoothly and deeply and sustain their focus and concentration, developing strength, flexibility, balance, mental clarity and emotional stability. Yoga Ed. presents this program as an effective and measurable methodology to achieve lifetime physical and mental health.

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 holding 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 to personal awareness and tools for dealing with life and making healthy, responsible choices.

Mission:

Our mission is to inspire, educate, facilitate and support children in developing physical health, emotional stability and self-awareness through informed and experiential study, self-exploration and yoga.

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 physical practice of yoga and the study of the body and body-mind system, students experientially learn about how their bodies and their thinking work as well as the relationship between physical and mental states. The physical demands of yoga require them to navigate and negotiate many challenges within their bodies and minds. Achieving physical strength, alignment, balance, flexibility and integration takes focus, determination and finesse. One must develop a compassionate and conscientious attitude toward oneself; one must learn how to deal with inner obstacles and 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. During the execution of instructions, students are guided in their explorations and asked to reflect on their outcomes. The results of the reflection process will be an awareness of tools with which to progress in yoga and to apply to achievement and problem solving in life.

Concepts:

These are the beliefs that inform the program philosophy.

We are each a whole, unique and precious being deserving of understanding and respect.

We are all always doing the best our current awareness and abilities allow.

We are all ever growing and learning.

We are all connected to a greater community; our actions make a difference and impact others.

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.

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:

To inspire students to establish and maintain a lifetime of wellness

To provide the tools to develop self-awareness and enhance social, physical, mental and emotional health and well being

To develop focus and concentration to enhance learning and achievement

To support children in finding enjoyment and success in physical activity

To facilitate the transference of yoga skills and outcomes to other academic and social situations and environments.

Objectives: Yoga Skills

Ability to apply basic body mechanics, alignment and proper posture

Ability to move gracefully, stretch and hold physical postures

Ability to center, integrate and balance oneself

Ability to understand and regulate breathing in challenging situations

Ability to focus and concentrate on a given task

Ability to slow down and connect with one's inner self

Ability to balance effort and receptivity – use finesse

Ability to relax and release tension

Ability to maintain and improve cardiovascular fitness and health

Ability to utilize specific techniques to manage stress

Ability to formulate and accomplish a self created goal

Ability to observe, identify, accept and work with thoughts and feelings

Ability to make positive choices that respect and support oneself and others

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

Physical Education Standards:

The Yoga Ed. Program is in alignment with California's 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 a context of others and community both historically and culturally.

The Yoga Ed. Program meets all California State physical education standards:

Movement Skills and Movement Knowledge:

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

Poses: students hold as well as flow through forward bending, back bending, twisting, balancing and inverted postures.

Games: students apply learned and created movements in fun and individual ways.

Partner Poses: students work together in new movement challenges of balance, trust and coordination

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.

Time-in: students learn how to be still, quiet and focused which deeply rests the body and mind, enhancing calm, balance, attention and clarity.

Discussion: students receive information and create a context for the purpose, value and benefits of movement participation.

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.

Games: students learn to improve at games through applying information and coaching.

Partner Poses: students develop their ability to work together to perform and improve partner poses.

Class Projects: by reflecting on their experience, students develop an awareness and understanding of their process and how to improve it.

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.

Time-in: students learn how to use this quiet time to support inner balance and health, focus and concentration.

Discussion: students receive information and create personal goals for fitness.

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.

Games: students learn to maintain health through movement, fun and laughter.

Partner Poses: students develop their ability to work together to enhance health and fitness.

Class Projects: students choose ways to enhance and maintain health and fitness through participation in personal assessments and creative projects.

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.

Time-in: students develop greater awareness of themselves - how they feel and why; they also gain clarity about what choices support them and what activities they truly enjoy.

Discussion: students receive information about how yoga can help them improve in other physical activities.

Poses: students develop a non-competitive, personally appropriate practice as they develop greater awareness of the affect of their physical and mental activity during yoga.

Games: students have opportunity to design and express themselves through other ways of moving and playing.

Partner Poses: students learn to trust each other and cooperate while sharing the challenge and enjoyment of working together creatively.

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.

Rest and Visualization: students learn to release stress physically and mentally as well as use imagination to improve performance and progress towards goals.

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

Time-in: students practice respecting others by remaining still and quiet developing focus and concentration

Discussion: students practice listening, taking turns and participating respectfully.

Poses: students learn what behavior is safe and unsafe during yoga and follow those rules with them selves as well as others.

Games: students practice moving and playing safely and cooperatively and are able to work through problems or conflicts with and without teacher supervision.

Partner Poses: students practice independently working together safely and cooperatively.

Class Projects: students practice building teamwork as they work independently on a project.

Rest and Visualization: students are able not to move, respecting others' personal space and creativity.

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.

Time-in: students practice respecting others by remaining still and quiet

Discussion: students practice listening, taking turns and participating respectfully

Poses: students learn what behavior is safe and unsafe during yoga and follow those rules with them selves as well as others

Games: students practice moving and playing safely and cooperatively and are able to work through problems or conflicts with and without teacher supervision

Partner Poses: students practice team-building with each other while moving, playing and communicating independently, safely and cooperatively

Class Projects: students practice working independently and building teamwork around a project

Rest and Visualization: students are able not to move, respecting others' personal space and creativity

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

Time-in: students try different forms of personal reflection and ways to cultivate concentration that have evolved throughout history and cultures.

Discussion: students share their growing understanding of the similarities and difference between yoga and other exercise

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

Games: students experience the influence of different backgrounds as they share and create their own games

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 three developmental levels: K-2, 3-5, 6-8. You will find similar content throughout which is presented differently according to age group. It assumes that all students have yoga once a week and are new to yoga. It also assumes that the instructor has had yoga teacher training and experience teaching kids or a Yoga Ed. Teacher Certification.

Unit One is 13 weeks long and includes an introductory lesson and assessment class. Units Two and Three are 12 weeks. All lessons are two weeks long with assessments built into the beginning and end of each unit. 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 used in part and 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. The **PROTOTYPES FOR PROJECTS** section has sample homework and class project handouts, a class journal form for teachers to use as a record of each class taught and resource suggestions. **GAMES FOR LIFE** is a reference book for the games and visualizations 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.

Grades K - 2: Physical awareness and skills – body and kinesthetic sense, spatial and environmental awareness, movement coordination, attention span, awareness of breath, strength, flexibility, balance, coordination, grace.

Grades 3 - 5: Mental/Emotional awareness and skills – focus/ attention, emotional awareness and intelligence, impact of thoughts and choices, movement skills, attention to breath, attitude, equanimity.

Grades 6 – 8: Self/ Community/ Universal awareness – individuation/ intention, values, goals, problem solving, teamwork, self-expression through movement, control of breath, thoughts and behavior.

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 affects of the practice on thoughts, feelings and energy. Students are guided in expanding their awareness of themselves before, during and after yoga. They explore and distinguish the *support* game from the *competition* game with themselves and others. Through journaling, homework, class and private discussion, students are asked to make observations as to how these differences affect them. They also move to a new level of challenge.

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

K – 2: Intro: What is yoga?

Lesson 1: Body Parts

Lesson 2: Breathing

Lesson 3: Posture/ Alignment

Lesson 4: Center

Lesson 5: Finesse

Lesson 6: Balance

3 – 5: Intro: What is yoga?

Lesson 1: Breathing

Lesson 2: Posture/ Alignment

Lesson 3: Body

Lesson 4: Finesse

Lesson 5: Balance

Lesson 6: Lines of Energy

6 – 8: Intro: What is yoga?

Lesson 1: Breathing

Lesson 2: Posture/ Alignment

Lesson 3: Body

Lesson 4: Finesse

Lesson 5: Balance

Lesson 6: Lines of Energy

UNIT TWO: MIND

K – 2:

Lesson 1: Observe

Lesson 2: Listen

Lesson 3: Touch

Lesson 4: Smell/Taste

Lesson 5: Feelings

Lesson 6: Choices

3 – 5:

Lesson 1: Observe

Lesson 2: Listen

Lesson 3: Feelings

Lesson 4: Choices

Lesson 5: Support

Lesson 6: Focus/Equanimity

6 – 8:

Lesson 1: Beginner's Mind

Lesson 2: Focus/ Equanimity

Lesson 3: Feelings

Lesson 4: Choices

Lesson 5: Principles

Lesson 6: Problem-solving

UNIT THREE: SELF

K – 2:

Lesson 1: Caring

Lesson 2: Nutrition

Lesson 3: Parts/Whole

Lesson 4: Opposites

Lesson 5: Partners

Lesson 6: Teamwork

3 – 5:

Lesson 1: Self-Care

Lesson 2: Nutrition

Lesson 3: Poses as tools

Lesson 4: Problem-solving

Lesson 5: Teamwork

Lesson 6: Peace

6 – 8:

Lesson 1: Self-Care

Lesson 2: Nutrition

Lesson 3: Poses as Tools

Lesson 4: Flexibility

Lesson 5: Teamwork

Lesson 6: Peace