Level 3 Participant Workbook
7-Day Transformations Event
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schedule Overview</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Focus on Yamas and Niyamas</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Are Family Lesson Plan</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Development Theories</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoga Benefits on Organ Systems</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s All Fun and Games with Yoga</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Yoga Sutra: Your Guide to Living Every Moment</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful Classroom Management Strategies Every Teacher Should Try</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 15th Element: Food!</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen Flows</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riding a Bike Lesson Plan</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering Healthy Chakras in Children</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planes, Bones and Muscles</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Needs: Conditions and Suggested Poses</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joints and Alignment</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transforming Trauma: How Yoga Heals</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dharma Meditation</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Business of Yoga</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2017 YogaKids International. All Rights Reserved
## Schedule Overview

### DAY 1
- **9:00 AM – 10:00 AM**: 1.1 Trainer-Led YogaKids Class
- **10:00 AM – 1:00 PM**: 1.2 Philosophy 101: Your YogaKids Mission
- **1:00 PM – 2:00 PM**: LUNCH
- **2:00 PM – 4:00 PM**: 1.3 Partner Poses and Family Yoga
- **4:00 PM – 6:00 PM**: 1.4 Childhood Development

### DAY 2
- **9:00 AM – 10:00 AM**: 2.1 Trainer-Led YogaKids Class
- **10:00 AM – 1:00 PM**: 2.2 Anatomy 101: The Organ Systems
- **1:00 PM – 2:00 PM**: LUNCH
- **2:00 PM – 4:00 PM**: 2.3 We All Win Games and Activities
- **4:00 PM – 6:00 PM**: 2.4 Philosophy 201: The Yoga Sutras

### DAY 3
- **9:00 AM – 11:00 AM**: 3.1 Classroom Management
- **11:00 AM – 1:00 PM**: 3.2 Anatomy 201: We Are What We Eat
- **1:00 PM – 2:00 PM**: LUNCH
- **2:00 PM – 4:30 PM**: 3.3 Teaching Teens
- **4:30 PM – 6:00 PM**: 3.4 Elements in Action (part 1)

### DAY 4
- **9:00 AM – 10:30 AM**: 4.1 Teaching Prep Session 1
- **10:30 AM – 1:00 PM**: 4.2 Teaching Preschoolers
- **1:00 PM – 2:00 PM**: LUNCH
- **2:00 PM – 4:30 PM**: 4.3 Philosophy 301: The Chakras
- **4:30 PM – 6:00 PM**: 4.4 Teaching Prep Session 2

### DAY 5
- **9:00 AM – 2:00 PM**: 5.1 Teaching Practicum
- **2:00 PM – 4:00 PM**: 5.2 Anatomy 301: Planes, Bones and Muscles
- **4:00 PM – 6:00 PM**: 5.3 Trainee Presentations
DAY 6
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM  6.1  Special Needs 101: The Conditions
11:00 AM – 1:00 PM  6.2  Anatomy 401: Joints, Alignment and Injury Prevention
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM   LUNCH
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM    6.3  Teaching Children with Trauma
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM    6.4  Philosophy 401: Visualizing Your Dharma

DAY 7
9:00 AM – 10:30 AM  7.1  Special Needs 201: Case Studies and Guiding Principals
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM 7.2  Elements in Action (part 2)
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM   LUNCH
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM    7.3  The Business of Yoga
The yamas and niyamas are the foundation of yoga. They are the roots from which the tree of yoga and our lives can grow in a happy, healthy and purposeful way. They make up the first two aspects or limbs of Ashtanga yoga.

Together the yamas and niyamas work to cleanse, purify and spiritualize. They clear the pathways to help bring forth a state of peace. Then, conscious and unconscious cosmic energy can be gathered to flow harmoniously through body and mind and open us to the realization of bliss.

Yamas ease and inform our relationship with the outer world. They eliminate distractions and negativity. The niyamas purify our relationship with our inner world. As these codes become fully understood and integrated daily, our yoga is directed to the rewards of practice, samadhi. Samadhi means bliss.

The five yamas described in Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras present an ethical code not unlike the Ten Commandments of the Judeo-Christian tradition. This might lead one to muse over their role in influencing western religious thought. However, in yoga these are much more psychological and energetic models than moral judgments. When we adhere to these guides for living, we develop an affinity for the divine side of our nature and become magnets for the positive gifts of life.

The yamas and niyamas are about choice. The meaning of yama is control. When we choose to exercise control of the mental, verbal and physical nature of the yamas we direct thoughts towards higher vibrational forces. These higher energetic waves have a direct effect on our endocrine system. Loving harmonious thoughts gather life force and create a healthy, satvic, alkaline environment in the body.

Negative thoughts, words and actions create just the opposite. It is through these choices that we create our reality and the way our lives unfold.

Srivatsa Ramaswami, the author of *Yoga for the 3 Stages of Life*, refers to the yama and niyamas as the do’s and don’ts of yoga. The yamas are the don’ts. Don’t be violent (ahimsa). Don’t lie (satya). Don’t steal (asteya). Don’t philander (brahmacharya). Don’t be greedy (aparigraha). While the sutras demand that these negative qualities are abstained from, it is more relevant today to choose the positive qualities that enrich and bring joy to our lives and the lives of those around us.
Ahimsa – Encourage and support the YogaKids and yourself in choosing to think, speak and act with kindness, peace and compassion towards yourself and others.

Satya – Always think, speak and act your truth for the betterment of others. Choose to always keep your word. Most importantly, know and honor your heart, your inner truth.

Asteya – Take nothing that does not belong to you. Earn all that you want and need. Give credit and praise where it is due. Think, speak and act with a sense of integrity.

Brahmacharya – Choose to control desires. Exhibit responsible behavior with movement towards the divine in thought, speech and action. Focus on that which is essential. Foster an understanding of respect and spiritual attuneness in all relationships, particularly with the opposite sex.

Aparigraha – Enjoy the gifts of your labor, that which is essential and necessary, without exploiting, abusing or denying others. Enjoy thoughts, speech and actions without being attached. Rejoice in the good fortune of others. Being able to take a vow reflects the level of peace within and the degree to which energy has been gathered and the Yamas have been integrated in one’s life. Cultivate a sense of simplicity, directing focus and energies inward towards the divine.

Below are five more yamas mentioned in other texts and tantras:

- Kasama – Practice forgiveness.
- Dhriti – Keep the intellect sharp.
- Daya – Show compassion.
- Arjava – Be straightforward.
- Mitahara – Moderation in diet.

The niyamas are the do’s - the practices that by observance, strength and discipline, harmonize the relationship between ones’ inner and outer life. Together with the yamas, we walk down the path of awakening our spiritual nature. By choosing the vows of niyama, the chakras are cleansed and polished to reflect the light of the divine. Like the yamas, Patanjali mentions only five niyamas, but other texts include an additional five niyamas.
Saucha – Inner and outer cleanliness leads one to a state of purity, of higher consciousness. In yoga this is achieved from both physical (outer) and spiritual (inner) attunement. The adage of cleanliness being next to godliness comes from this idea of saucha. Bathing, taking care of our bodies, the use of mudras, choosing the purest foods available are expressions of physical saucha. Chanting, pranayama and purity of speech raises the vibration of verbal saucha while mental saucha is invoking the discipline to keep one's thoughts pure. The six techniques for internal cleansing are dhauti (stomach cleansing), basti (colon cleansing), neti (nasal cleansing), traktaka (eye cleansing), nauli (abdominal cleansing), and kapalabhati (skull shining).

Santosha – To be content on the three levels of mind, body and speech is the most important of the niyamas. In the realm of the mental, be content with what we have or don’t have, accept what is, and remain undisturbed by what gets lost or taken away. Understand the laws of karma and abundance. In the realm of the verbal, choose your words carefully. Refrain from speaking harsh, bitter or judgmental words about yourself and others. Take time to sit silently in quiet meditation. Physical contentment is doing no violence for any reason. Let go of desires and embrace beauty of movement without attachment. One who is content has everything.

Tapas – Mental austerity means to balance, hence silence the mind for a state of quietude and equanimity. By bringing our thoughts inward we choose to move away from greed, anger and craving, all of which distract the mind. Austerity of speech means choosing only words of beauty, peace and empowerment. Physical austerities that are satvic in nature, moderate and without attachment clear the body and mind, raising the kundalini energy up through the chakras for purposes of enlightenment.

Svadhyaya – Mental self-study or self-examination can be pursued through the chanting of mantra, the reading of and meditating on sacred texts, or inward contemplation. Verbal self-examination is then the chanting of mantra, kirtan and the reading out loud of sacred scripture. Physical self-study is developing an awareness of correct asana and an understanding of what the body can do. Again, this is without attachment or a rigid idea of what should be versus being present to the reality and divinity of what is.
**Isvarapranidhana** - This is the culmination of all understanding gained through the yamas and niyamas. When all is surrendered, desires released, all our thoughts, words and actions lead to spiritual enlightenment. Total dedication of all our being to understanding Om illuminates that all is for and from spirit. It is here that we merge with God’s bliss.

Below are five more Niyamas mentioned in other texts and tantras:

- **Astikya** - Belief in truth.
- **Danam** - Practice of charity.
- **Hri** - Practice modesty.
- **Mati** - Develop intellectual faith.
- **Japa** - Recitation of mantra.
- **Vrata** - Observing religious ritual, performing acts that acknowledge the sacred.

In yoga, the yamas (the don'ts) and niyamas (the do's) are best acted on from a place of inner wisdom. There is no rigid dogma forcing the letter of the law. A sense of humor goes a long way in lending lightness, acceptance and appreciation for all that is. Trust your truth, your judgment in any situation coming from a perspective of balance and flexibility. Every situation is unique and special. There are no formulas for getting an A in life. Listen to your heart and make choices that are in accordance with these guidelines to find your place of truth... of freedom.
AGE GROUP: Parents and children, ages 5-10

MATERIALS: Prepared music, ball, yoga straps, scarves

KEY ELEMENTS: We All Win, Bridge of Diamonds

SHORT DESCRIPTION/TOPIC
Families will work together to; stretch, strengthen, cooperate and connect!

DISCUSSION POINTS
We are all special, unique, shining diamonds. Share with the group something special about your child/parent.

CONNECTING CIRCLE
1. Clearly explain your expectations regarding participation and behavior.
2. Introduce the Theme “Cultivating Connection”

Back-to-Back Breathing: Parent and child sit back to back, feel each other's breath. Begin to breathe together, slowly and deeply.

POSES AS PATHWAYS/INTEGRATE THE ELEMENTS

Seated Warm Up Poses: Practice this sequence of poses in and out of sync with your partner. For instance, in riding the camel both flex and extend together, and then work out of sync and have one partner flex while the other extends.

- Riding the Camel
- Sunrise Sunset
- Moo and Meow
- Down Diggity Doggy Down to Up Uppity Doggie Up

The partner who is flexing is stretching the back of the body, freeing the neck and head. The person who is extending is opening the heart, strengthening the arms, wrists and hands. Both partners are improving the suppleness and strength of the spine. This is a great way to energize the body. Do 10-20 repetitions in the morning to start you day off right! (Body Benefits)

Standing Warm Up Poses

- Aligning My Joint
- Pelvic Bowling
Tight Rope Walking: In this partner version, line yoga straps on the floor and have partners stand on opposite ends of the “rope”. Walk towards one another, grabbing hands when you meet in the center. While holding hands, walk the tightrope together... forwards and backwards...trust your partner will guide you safely. Explore one person closing their eyes while the other one guides them, then switch.

“Sometimes it is hard to trust others when we are not sure where they are leading us. Trust in your partner and know they will keep you safe.” (Bridge of Diamonds)

Elbow to Knee/Reverse Hand to Foot: In this version of Elbow to knee, stand face to face with your partner. Instead of tapping your own knee, reach across the body and clap your right hand with the right hand of your partner, as you lift your left knee. Clap your own hands together as you step down. Then switch and clap left hands as the right knee lifts. (think of “patty cake” with alternating knees). Then try to keep the rhythm but lift the heel behind instead. Maybe try to alternate. Maybe try to clap a little faster!

Introduce musical tempos:

“Andante is a walking pace. Allegro is a quicker tempo. It is cheerful or brisk while adagio is slow and at ease.” Call out one of the musical terms and have the group respond with the appropriate tempo while doing this partner pose.” (Musical Musings)

Partner Poses

Play We Are Family by The Pointer Sisters or any appropriate song of your choice for the following sequence.

Sitting on a Rock: One person rests in Child’s Pose (usually the larger adult) while another family member aligns the pant line of their pants with that of the person on the floor and gently sits. The person on the bottom gets a deeper spine stretch.

Lizard Sunbathing on a Rock: Starting in the same position with one person in Child’s Pose, the second person furthers their stretch by lying down head to head and extending their arms side to side. Fun fact: A genetic study of desert night lizards shows they live in family groups. Desert Night Lizards invest time and energy in their young and forming families -- a strategy that was thought exclusive to mammals and birds. (Ecological Echoes)
WE ALL WIN

Pass the Ball: Have the group sit in a circle and pass a soft ball around the circle with their feet. *Fun facts about feet: The 52 bones in your feet make up one quarter of all the bones in your body. There are approximately 250,000 sweat glands in a pair of feet, and they excrete as much as half a pint of moisture each day. A 2½-inch high heel can increase the load on the forefoot by 75%. The average person takes 8,000 to 10,000 steps a day, which add up to 115,000 miles in a lifetime - more than 4 times the circumference of the globe. (Awesome Anatomy)*

**Down Dog Tunnels:** Everyone lines up side to side in Down Diggity Doggie Down Pose and everyone takes turns slinking through the tunnel and getting back into Down Dog when they reach the end of the tunnel.

**Double Down Dog:** One person gets into Down Diggity Doggie Down Pose. The second person stands near the hands of their partner and faces away. Then they move into a short version of their Down Diggity Doggie Down pose and slowly lifts their feet onto the sacrum (pant line) of the first and gets into their own down dog.

**Group Tree:** Begin in tree pose. Feel what it is like to stand on your own. Now switch sides and this time create a forest of trees, palms touching the person to your left and right. *We are all connected. What happens on one side of the forest affects the other side. But together, we can support each other and help each other, and maybe something that was a challenge to do on your own, is a little easier with the support of family and friends. (Bridge of Diamonds)*

**Group Warrior III:** Transition from group tree pose into a group Powerful Warrior III pose. Holding hands, lean forward and allow the lifted leg to float back. Repeat on the other side. *Together, we are powerful. (Affirmations)*

**Partner Throw and Grab:** Shout out different directions during this partner version of Throw and Grab. For example: Use right hands only. Stand on one foot. Close your eyes. Spin in a circle after you throw. Now ask participants to count how many times they can toss the scarves without dropping them. (Math Medley and Brain Balance)

**Unique Pose:** Ask each group of partners to create a unique partner pose from an existing YogaKids pose (that you would not expect). Go around the circle, share your unique pose and the group does it too! Make up a new name for your new pose!
**Savasana:** Experience Savasana with your partner. Rest facing opposite directions with your heads side-by-side (ear to ear). Or, you may choose to do one long line with a group (half on one side, and half on the other, heads in the center). Or choose Zig Zag Breathing. (Quiet Quests)

- Circle of Friendship Flowers
- Namasté Song
- Gruggling
Jean Piaget (1896-1980) is, quite possibly, the most influential of all childhood development theorists. Prior to Piaget, children were simply considered mini-adults. Piaget theorized that children experience stages of cognitive development.

Piaget theorized that children progress through 4 stages of cognitive development:

- Sensorimotor (from birth-2 years of age)
- Preoperational (from 2-6 years of age)
- Concrete Operations (from 7-11 years of age)
- Formal Operational (12 + years of age)

Each stage is defined by a set of skills and behaviors:

- **Object Permanence:** Understanding that objects continue to exist even when they cannot be observed. This skill develops in the sensorimotor stage.

- **Egocentrism:** Inability to differentiate between oneself and others. This trait is common in children in the preoperational stage.

- **Conservation:** The preservation of a physical quantity during transformations (i.e. understanding that if you break up a candy bar into pieces, it's still the same amount as the whole). This skill develops in the concrete operations stage.

- **Mega-Cognition:** Awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes. This skill develops in the formal operational stage.

Different YogaKids activities can resonate with different children, depending on their cognitive development. A Math Medley multiplication activity, for instance, is perfect for children in the concrete operational stage. And Swim Ducky Swim is a wonderful pose for children in the sensorimotor stage.

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) was an American psychologist who popularized a theory for explaining our human needs. According to Maslow's theory, our needs begin at the bottom of the pyramid and move up as each one is met. As yogis, we are striving to help our students reach the top tier: self-actualization.
However, we must recognize that our students have other needs that must be met first. Students will not be motivated towards self-actualization if they are hungry — or if they feel unsafe, unloved or un-worthy.

Below is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs pyramid. As you can see, our physiological needs (food, water, shelter, sleep) are at the bottom.

![Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs pyramid](image)

**Erik Erikson** (1902-1994), a German psychologist, popularized his theory of psychosocial development. Unlike other childhood development theories, Erikson's model includes the entire lifespan. The stages can be viewed as internal struggles affected by our social environments. According to Erikson, our psychological health is based on our ability to successfully deal with each subsequent struggle.
Below are the stages of psychosocial development as proposed by Erikson:

- Trust vs. Mistrust (infant)
- Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (toddler)
- Initiative vs. Guilt (preschool)
- Industry vs. Inferiority (early elementary)
- Identity vs. Confusion (high school)
- Intimacy vs. Isolation (early adult)
- Generatively vs. Stagnation (adulthood)
- Integrity vs. Despair (late adulthood)

We, as YogaKids Teachers, can help our students achieve success in these struggles. For example, allowing our early elementary students the space to do poses imperfectly without criticism can help them feel more industrious and willing to try.

**Lawrence Kohlberg** (1927-1987) is an American psychologist, popularized by his theory of moral development. Kohlberg divided our moral development into 3 distinct stages, each with its own defining characteristics.

| Pre-conventional | Obedience and Punishment
| Self-Interest |
| Conventional | Interpersonal Accord/Conformity
| Authority / Social Order |
| Post-Conventional | Social Contract
| Universal Ethical Principles |

According to Kohlberg, our morality shifts throughout our lives. During the first preconventional stage, we are guided by obedience, the threat of punishment, and self-interest. Think of a toddler learning not to hit his sister. At first, he is guided by obedience or fear of punishment. (My mother has told me not to hit my sister. If I hit my sister, I get in trouble.) During this pre-conventional stage, he can also be guided by self-interest. (My mother gives me a treat when I don’t hit my sister.)
As the boy grows and matures, his morality does as well — leading to the second conventional stage. This is characterized by a desire to fit in and do as others expect. (No one else is hitting their sisters. I probably shouldn’t either. Hitting my sister would be considered “wrong” by my teachers.)

The last stage of moral development is called the post-conventional stage. This is when we begin thinking about justice and the “bigger” consequences of our actions. (Hitting my sister IS empirically wrong and could have negative unforeseen impact.)

While no educational theory can encompass the whole of our childhood development, understanding the different theories can help us better understand the students in our own YogaKids classes.
The human body is made up of 11 different organ systems.

- Circulatory (arteries, veins, heart)
- Digestive (stomach, intestines)
- Endocrine (pituitary gland, hypothalamus)
- Integumentary (skin, hair, nails)
- Lymphatic (spleen, thymus gland)
- Muscular (muscles)
- Nervous (brain, nerves, spinal cord)
- Reproductive (prostate, ovaries)
- Respiratory (lungs)
- Skeletal (bones)
- Urinary/Excretory (kidneys, urethra)

Understanding the different systems and how they work together will deepen your knowledge of yoga benefits for the human body.

The **circulatory system** is a network of organs and vessels responsible for the flow of blood, nutrients, hormones, oxygen, and other gases to and from cells. Yoga helps the circulatory system by increasing blood flow to the different areas of the body. This increased blood flow results in the improved function of the entire body.

The **digestive system** is responsible for converting food into energy. The increased blood flow can improve the function of your digestive organs, aiding indigestion, cramping, bloating and constipation. Twisting asanas are especially beneficial in improving digestion.

The **endocrine system** is a collection of glands that secrete hormones directly into the circulatory system to be carried to other parts of the body. Once again, the increased blood flow to this system improves their function and helps keep our hormones balanced. This can lead to many healthy developments, such as better sleep, improved moods, and less stress.
The **integumentary system** protects us from our environment and includes the largest organ of the body (the skin). The yoga benefits of a healthy digestive system can show up in your face, resulting in clearer skin. (As you can see, the benefits – just like the organ systems – are all connected!)

The main function of the **lymphatic system** is to transport lymph, a fluid containing infection-fighting white blood cells, throughout the body. It is also responsible for ridding the body of toxins and waste. By improving the distribution of lymph, yoga can improve immunity and sustain a feeling of well-being.

The **muscular system** includes all the muscles of the body, and is responsible for the movement of the body. Yoga asanas help us strengthen these muscles, while also improving our posture and flexibility.

The **nervous system** is your command center – and carries message to and from the brain and spinal cord to various parts of the body. Calming asanas, meditation, and breathing practices can lower stress, increase mental clarity and aid relaxation.

The **reproductive system** includes the organs responsible for reproduction. The increased blood flow to the reproductive organs brought on by yoga can aid functionality, improving fertility.

The **respiratory system** is responsible for taking in oxygen and expelling carbon dioxide. Pranayama aids in respiratory health by teaching us to breathe properly – providing sufficient oxygen for the efficient functioning of every cell in the body.

The **skeletal system** includes all our bones, tendons, ligaments and cartilage, and provides us with form, support, and protection. Yoga helps the skeletal system by promoting the flow of synovial fluid, which lubricates the joints and allows for smooth painless movement of our bones.

The **urinary/excretory system** is responsible for removing waste from the body. Yoga can help stimulate the internal organs of this system, specifically the kidneys. This leads to improved function, helping them to stay healthy and free of disease.

The benefits of yoga on the different organ systems are vast – and this list is far from complete. The study of anatomy (like the study of yoga) is a never-ending journey and we encourage you to stay informed – as science never stops and new developments are always imminent.
A great way to get kids moving and enjoying yoga is by turning the poses into a game. Gather up the kids and incorporate a yoga aspect to games that you already play. Check your game closet and re-sales for inspiration. Here are some games that I incorporate when I teach YogaKids classes or just want to play around with my own kids.

**Yoga Parachute:** Place pose cards (picture cards of kids performing yoga poses) under a kid’s toy parachute. Take turns running under and grabbing a card. You can even say a little rhyme to go with it. As we all lift the parachute up and down we say “1, 2, 3, 4... get down on the floor... 5, 6, 7, 8 pick a pose that feels great!” The child whose turn it is goes under the parachute on “4” and tries to be out with a pose card by “8.” After everyone has a turn, create a flow with each child performing the pose on his or her card.

**Yoga Jenga:** Place small stickers on several of the Jenga blocks. Make a key indicating to what pose each sticker corresponds. When the child pulls out a Jenga block from the tower, they will see what pose should be performed by all players. When the tower falls, have all the players hold a challenging pose for several breaths. I like to use Lizard pose!

**Yoga Limbo:** Even a broomstick will work. Try Down Diggety Doggie Down and crab walking under the stick. Don't forget to play Chubby Checker's *Limbo Rock* song!

**Dice Game:** Use oversized dice. Roll the dice and add them together. (Multiply for older kids.) That's how many seconds to hold a certain pose.

**Suspend Game (by the brand Melissa & Doug):** This is a fun game of balance. When you roll the dice, do a certain type of pose corresponding to a different color (green = backbend, yellow = balance, red= twist, blue= inversion, etc.). The game includes a stand and several sticks that players will suspend and balance on each other. When it falls down, hold a challenging pose for several breaths.

**Moo, Moo, Cat:** Just like Duck, Duck, Goose – but we substitute yoga poses, like Moo and Meow.
**Puzzles:** Before you play with the kids, assemble an easy kid's puzzle face down. Write several poses on the blank side so that the words overlap on different pieces. Break apart the pieces and assemble again face down with your YogaKids. You can every try to do all the poses in a flow series.

**Scrabble or Bananagrams:** Use the tiles to create pose names that can be linked together. Can the poses be performed together to make a flow that feels fantastic? You can also arrange the tiles in a mixed-up order to spell a pose. The kids can unscramble the letters and do the pose.

**Boggle:** Do you see any words that could be poses? Can you make up poses for any words you find?

**Operation:** Get your Awesome Anatomy! Players perform surgery and then do poses that could help that part of the body feel better. Twisting helps our “spare ribs” feel good!

**Peace** – It’s like the card game “War” but We All Win because we are doing yoga! Take a stack of blank index cards and write a name of a pose on each card. Divide the cards among 2 players. They each flip over their card at the same time. They need to each perform the pose but try to link it together to make it a partner pose. Imagine what a Downward Facing Dog Pigeon might look like!

**Kids Choice Game:** Challenge your students to turn a game that you already have into a yoga game!
Yoga is so much more than asana. The sutras show us how to be our true selves and appreciate every moment—even when life gets crazy.

It was one of those nights: My husband was out, two of our three kids were sick with colds, I had a work deadline the next morning, and one of the dogs found and tore into a dirty diaper, spreading the contents all over the room. And I mean all over. It was a last-straw moment to beat any others, and I was either going to freak out—yell at the dogs, curse my husband for being unavailable, and stomp around the house wondering why all these things had to happen at once—or find a way to draw on the tools Patanjali provides in the Yoga Sutra to accept the situation with as much grace as I could and figure out how to get through it with as little suffering as possible. So, I opted for the latter, managed to laugh a little, put the dogs outside, and cleaned up the mess. This, I realized in that moment, is why I do yoga.

One of the greatest things I’ve learned from my teacher, T. K. V. Desikachar, is that the true value of yoga is found when you apply it to your daily life—especially in those messy moments (say, when your dog decides to have at a dirty diaper). The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali, widely regarded as the authoritative text on yoga, is not just for contemplating on the mat. The sutras are meant to be put to the test and practiced in your work, leisure time, and in your role as a parent, partner, and friend.

The Yoga Sutra, explained

This ancient yogic text is traditionally presented as a guide for refining the mind so one can reach the highest states of concentration and focus. This focus is a means to an end: It leads to a clearer perception and the ability to know the Self, which ultimately results in independence from suffering. The 195 short verses are believed to have been compiled sometime around 350 CE by Patanjali, whom traditionalists also credit with writing texts on Ayurvedic medicine and Sanskrit grammar. Very little is known about the man Patanjali. In fact, it’s unclear whether Patanjali was an individual or simply a name created to represent several people. Yet while factual details about Patanjali are scant, the Yoga Sutra and its lessons are still with us today.
The 195 sutras are divided into four books, or padas, which cover four broad topics: what yoga is (samadhi pada); how to attain a state of yoga (sadhana pada); the benefits of yoga practice (vibhuti pada); and the freedom from suffering (kaivalya pada) that is the eventual goal or result of a consistent practice. The word sutra comes from the same root as “suture,” or thread—each concept is compact and discrete, but it can be woven together with others to present a full tapestry of meaning.

Though composed of few words, each verse is rich with meaning and depth, so that the most advanced student can continue to gain new insights even after years of study. Every carefully chosen word has clear meanings and connotations, which is why the sutras are best learned from an acarya, or “one who travels the path”—an experienced teacher who can help you appreciate the layers of complexity in the text and apply their meaning to your life.

While Patanjali is concerned primarily with calming, focusing, and refining the mind, the ultimate reward of putting the sutras into practice is that you feel better at every level of your human system, and the potential impact of this on your day-to-day life is limitless. When your mind is less agitated, you experience less anxiety and sleep better. When you have clearer perception, your confidence increases as you make fewer mistakes. Your relationships become more fulfilling as you take more emotional risks and connect with others from a place of knowing yourself more deeply. When you are more connected with your own needs and tendencies, you can take better care of yourself, whether that means eating more healthfully, finding a new job, or getting enough rest.

Admittedly, putting the sutras into practice off the mat can be especially challenging, but it’s a worthwhile endeavor, and starting with the eight sutras will give you a brief introduction to the transformative power that Patanjali’s simple but fundamental principles can have in your daily life. Consider them tools that are so universal in their approach and applicability, everyone can benefit from them, regardless of their background, experience, or beliefs. If you’ve never contemplated the Yoga Sutra, think of these eight verses as an entryway for accessing the support Patanjali has to offer you in your own life. Perhaps they’ll serve as an invitation to learn more.
Put in the practice

1.14 sa tu dirgha-kala-nairantarya-satkara-adora-asevita drdha-bhumih

To achieve a strong foundation in our practice, we must practice over a long time, without interruption, believing in it and looking forward to it, with an attitude of service.

Whenever you undertake anything new, whether it’s a relationship, a job, or a course of study, Patanjali advises you to recognize that there is going to be some effort involved. You must consciously create the foundation you hope to build on. Becoming a parent, starting a business, studying piano, taking up rock climbing—whatever you’re undertaking, if you approach it with the attitudes described by this sutra, you will experience more joy in the activity itself and you’ll create a solid foundation on which to build the future.

The first guideline Patanjali offers is dirgha-kala, or “long time.” This means recognizing that what you are undertaking cannot be perfected overnight, that you have to commit over time to get lasting results that you are happy with. Nairantarya, the next guideline, translates as “no interruption,” which addresses your continued commitment to the process. Your efforts must be wholehearted; an attitude of a little bit here and a little bit there is not going to help you reach your goal. Imagine trying to learn how to play the piano without practicing regularly, or trying to lose weight while eating healthfully only once in a while.

Satkara, the third guideline, means belief in what you are doing. If you approach a task with uncertainty, or with the attitude that your endeavor will fail, you set yourself up for disappointment. Patanjali advises that if you believe in what you are doing, your efforts will have greater impact. If you’re an activist lobbying for stricter clean-air protocols, for example, you have to believe in the cause if your efforts are going to effectively inspire others to support your work, and it helps you maintain your own momentum and enthusiasm.

Adara refers to the fact that you must look forward to what you’re doing. Whatever you set out to do, Patanjali advises that, on some level, you must enjoy the job at hand. Even if what you’re doing is difficult or tiring, there can still be joy and satisfaction in the effort if you know that you are experiencing something positive.
from it. Adara is important because, without it, you are prone to burnout or to abandoning your commitment.

Lastly, Patanjali mentions asevita, meaning that you must approach each endeavor with an attitude of service. You can do this by asking yourself, How can I best serve my work? My relationship? This practice? If you are parenting, one way you can serve that practice is by making sure that you get enough rest, time for yourself, and healthful food, so that when you are with your kids you can be at your best. Service to your efforts might mean getting a good night’s sleep before making a big presentation at work. Or it could simply mean approaching your work—whether it’s volunteering at a nonprofit or running a huge international corporation—with a positive attitude.

Get to know your true self

2.17 drashtr-drshyayoh samyogo heya-hetuh

The cause of our suffering is the inability to distinguish between what is the truth (what perceives) and what appears to be the truth (what is perceived).

2.23 sva-svami-saktyoh svarupa- upalabdhi-hetuh samyogah

The inability to discern between the temporary, fluctuating mind and our own true Self, which is eternal, is the cause of our suffering, yet this suffering provides us with the opportunity to make this distinction and to learn and grow from it, by understanding the true nature of each.

Patanjali says that the cause of suffering (heya-hetuh) is the inability to distinguish (samyoga) between two entities—the Self, or seer (drashtr), and the mind (drshyam), which includes your thoughts and emotions. Distinguishing between the two closely related entities—and understanding the role of each and the relationship between them—is a central goal of yoga and the key to your happiness and peace. Think of it this way: Imagine you’re a personal assistant who works closely with your boss and functions as her representative in public. Now, think about what would happen if you began to feel and act as if you were the boss, eventually forgetting to consult or even recognize your boss. Obviously, some problems would likely occur if this distinction were blurred. So, think of the Self, or
seer, as the boss, and the mind as the boss’s instrument or assistant, recognizing the distinct role each one plays. That’s when you will acquire clearer perception.

Of course, one might say that Patanjali recognizes the value of both entities. It’s not that the mind is bad or the Self, or seer, is better. You need your mind, emotions, and identity to live in the world, just as you need your inner compass, or true Self.

What’s crucial is discerning the role of each and making sure that each entity is acting according to its proper role. The good news is that while the difficulty of distinguishing these two entities can be frustrating, and can even cause you a great deal of discomfort and pain, Patanjali says that the suffering that results when you mistake one for the other actually helps set you on your road to greater clarity.

The mistakes you make, and the pain you feel as a result, serve to guide you toward a greater understanding (upalabdhi—literally “to obtain or go near”) of both the true nature (svarupa) of the mind and the true nature of the Self, or seer—“the external that is seen and the internal that sees,” as T. K. V. Desikachar describes them. It is only through this increased understanding of the nature of each and the relationship between them that you are able to differentiate between the two, and hence prevent future suffering.

Instead of being too critical of yourself when you make a mistake, the message here is that you can let go of self-blame, regret, and criticism. By holding on to those thoughts, you are only making yourself more miserable, adding suffering on top of the suffering, so to speak. Patanjali is concerned with the present: You are here now, so it’s irrelevant how you got here, whose fault it was, or how badly you messed up. The important thing is that your mistakes give you a chance to learn something about yourself and to potentially do things differently the next time.

**Walk in someone else’s shoes**

2.33 vitarka-badhane pratipaksha-bhavanam

2.34 vitarka himsadayah krta-karita-anumodita lobha-krodha-moha-purvaka mrdu-madhya-adhimatra duhkha-ajnana ananta-phalah iti pratipaksha-bhavanam

*To avoid hasty actions that may be harmful, we must practice trying to imagine or visualize the opposite of our first, instinctual reaction. We must see things from a different point of view and weigh the potential consequences.*
Often, Patanjali’s most powerful advice broadens your view, shifting your frame of reference or offering a new vantage point from which to see things (pratipaksha-bhavanam). These shifts might seem simple, but they can have a profound impact on your experience. Patanjali advises that to avoid doing harm by acting hastily, you must try to “visualize the opposite side.”

Patanjali is quite specific in these sutras, explaining that hasty actions that cause harm to others can happen in three ways: You hurt someone directly (krta: I am angry, so I kick someone); you hurt someone by way of someone else (karita: I ask my friend to kick another on my behalf); or you approve, encourage, or feel glad about harm done to another person (anumodita). Patanjali explains some reasons that people harm others, including greed (lobha), anger (krodha), and delusion or infatuation (moha). He then warns that, whether you harm someone a little bit (mrdu), an average amount (madhya), or a great deal (adhimatra), the result for you is the same: endless suffering (duhkha) and a lack of clarity (ajnana). To avoid this, practice pratipaksha-bhavanam.

Patanjali is a realist. He is not saying that you should not have legitimate feelings, or that you should judge yourself for feeling the way you do. He is reminding you that if you think badly of another, that person doesn’t suffer—you do. If you actually harm another person, you will likely suffer as much as, if not more than, the person you harm.

Patanjali offers this advice not so that you can become the citizen of the year, but so you can be happier and more fulfilled. It might sound selfish, but the most supportive thing you can do for the world is to focus on your own personal growth and transformation, and then act from that place in the world.

**Tap into your inner strength**

1.20 shraddha-virya-smrti-samadhi-prajna-purvakah itaresham

*For those of us who were not born into states of higher consciousness or knowing, we must cultivate self-confidence and conviction to help us maintain our persistence and strength, and to remember our direction so that we may attain our goal of a focused mind and clear perception.*
Often translated as “faith,” shraddha is more appropriately translated as “self-esteem,” “personal conviction,” “self-confidence,” or “determination.” If you are consciously making an effort to achieve greater clarity (itaresham), your conviction (shraddha) will be followed by the strength and persistence (virya) to remember your direction (smrti) and to reach your goal of total and clear understanding (samadhi-prajna).

Practically speaking, shraddha is your inner strength; when you're lost in the woods and it's getting dark, shraddha is your deep inner trust that you will find a way to make a fire, get warm, and find something to eat. It's the guiding force inside that urges you to keep putting one foot in front of the other until you come out of the woods. This resource is one of your greatest assets—a way to help you connect to your own true Self or the place of quiet light within.

Later, in sutra 1.22, Patanjali indicates that shraddha is apt to wane and fluctuate. We all have days when we feel more confident and self-assured, and days when we doubt ourselves. Shraddha is unique to each person: You might have just a little bit, or you might have a lot. The potential to cultivate shraddha is within you, though you might not be aware of that potential, or use it to your advantage. The right support (a good teacher, friend, partner, or mentor) can help you cultivate and strengthen shraddha.

Most daily challenges aren't as dramatic as being lost in the woods. But if you're facing a stressful time at work or dealing with an illness or a difficult relationship, it helps to remember that within you is the strength that can carry you through the hardest of times. Even if things become so difficult that you forget your inner strength, it is still there.

**Align your attitude**

1.33 maitri-karuna-mudita- upekshanam sukha-duhkha- punyapunya-visayanam bhavanatah-citta-prasadanam

An attitude of friendliness toward those who are happy, compassion toward those who are suffering, pleasure and delight at those who are doing good deeds in the world, and
nonjudgmental watchfulness toward those who do harmful deeds will help us to attain a peaceful and balanced mind.

Recognizing that you can change your mood by shifting your attitude is an important step toward easing suffering. But implementing the attitudes Patanjali suggests is not always easy. Patanjali says you should feel friendliness (maitri) toward those who are happy (sukha). This seems like obvious advice, but how often, when others are happy, do we find ourselves feeling jealous, or bad about ourselves, with thoughts like “Why didn’t I get that raise? Why didn’t I win the lottery? Maybe that person cheated! They don’t deserve it!”

Likewise, Patanjali says you should have compassion (karuna) for those who are suffering (duhkha). But instead of compassion, you might feel responsible for saving them, guilty about their misfortune, or fearful that what happened to them could happen to you.

When others are doing good deeds in the world (punya), instead of feeling joy (mudita), you might feel critical of yourself for not doing the same, or even suspicious about their motives or integrity. Perhaps most difficult of all, Patanjali says that you should try to maintain an attitude of nonjudgmental watchfulness or observance (upeksa) toward those people who are doing harmful deeds in the world (apunya). This can be extremely challenging. How often do you jump in and place blame, taking sides without knowing the full picture?

Patanjali uses the word upeksa intentionally: He’s not telling you to hide your head in the sand, but to observe from a safe distance and with nonjudgment. If you can adopt these attitudes, you will receive the blessings of a calm, peaceful, and balanced mind (citta-prasadanam). And through this, your path will become clear.

Remember, the Yoga Sutra is a guide to feeling better in daily life, not to becoming a saint, and sometimes the best action isn’t the most heroic one. I once got between two dogs that were fighting to break them up. Without thinking, I tried to pull the dogs apart and ended up getting a bad bite. Had I not reacted so quickly, I might have thought of a better solution, like using a stick to separate them, or asking for help from someone more experienced. Similarly, if you witness an injustice on the street and get in the middle of it, you’re putting yourself in a position of conflict, and could become injured. But if you observe, trying not to pass
judgment, you will be able to respond more clearly and act effectively while preserving your peace of mind and your personal well-being.

**Find your inner compass**

1.29 tatah pratyak-cetana adhigamo'py antarayabhavas ca

*Those who have a meaningful connection with something greater than themselves will come to know their own true Selves and experience a reduction in those obstacles that may deter them from reaching their goal.*

Once you are linked with something beyond your own identity, two things happen, says Patanjali: First, the inner consciousness (pratyak-cetana) is revealed (adhigamah) as the Self; second, the obstacles that deter you on your path (antaraya) are reduced and eventually extinguished (abhava). Coming to a place of independence from these obstacles of the mind facilitates a deeper connection with your own inner compass—that quiet, peaceful place within. When you are connected to this inner compass, you are better able to handle the twists and turns of life. You don’t take things so personally. Your mood generally remains stabler. You see things more clearly, and so you are able to make choices that serve you better. As Patanjali says, it is almost as though you become independent of the effects of whatever is occurring around you. You can experience it without absorbing it or identifying with it. You have the distance and perspective to see that what you’re experiencing is not who you are, but rather something that’s happening to you, and you can therefore move through it with greater ease.

I experimented with this soon after a friend’s wife died, when he started shouting at me one evening in front of a group of people. Somehow, without effort, I understood that he was not really angry at me. I recognized that he was in fact extremely sad about his wife’s death, and, even though he was saying terrible things to me, my ego did not step up and feel humiliated. Nor did I get defensive and retaliate by saying terrible things back to him that I would later regret.

Instead, I had an awareness that extended beyond my own immediate experience, which, while it certainly wasn’t pleasant, was not devastating or even hurtful because I was clear that it was not about me. I did not feel anger, embarrassment,
or any of the other things I might have felt had I been acting from my ego or emotions. Instead, I felt deep compassion and understanding for my friend. I knew he did not want to hurt me, and I knew how much he was hurting.

The results of putting the principles of the Yoga Sutra into practice show up in moments like this, when you least expect them, with gifts of clarity and compassion. It’s here, in your relationships with others, in your moods, in your reactions to life’s situations, that you know your yoga practice is working, helping you to stay anchored, calm, and stable.

In these moments, you are able to respond from a place of love and trust, of compassion and nonjudgment. You shine from your center as a result of being connected to something deep within you as well as beyond you. When you are connected to your core and acting from that place within, you will find that you can handle almost any situation with much greater ease and clarity.

Kate Holcombe is founder and executive director of the nonprofit Healing Yoga Foundation in San Francisco and a longtime private student of T. K. V. Desikachar. Visit her at healingyoga.org.
One of the biggest challenges for almost every teacher, especially first-year teachers, is how to handle classroom management. It can be a struggle for even the most seasoned veteran teacher. Every class and every student provide a somewhat different challenge. Some are more naturally more difficult than others. There are many different classroom management strategies, and each teacher has to find what works best for them. This article highlights five best practices for effective student discipline.

**Have a Positive Attitude**

It may seem like a simple concept, but there are many teachers that do not approach their students with a positive attitude on a day to day basis. Students will feed off of a teacher’s overall attitude. A teacher who teaches with a positive attitude will often have students who have positive attitudes. A teacher who has a poor attitude will have students who reflect this and are difficult to manage in class. When you praise your students instead of tearing them down, they will work harder to please you. Build on the moments when your students are doing things the right way and the bad moments will decrease.

**Set Your Expectations Early**

Do not go into the school year trying to be your students’ friend. You are the teacher, and they are the students, and those roles should be clearly defined from the beginning. Students need to be aware at all times that you are the authority figure. The first day of school is one of the most important in how your classroom management experience will go throughout the year. Start out extremely tough with your students, and then you can back off some as the year goes along. It is important that your students know from the beginning what your rules and expectations are and who is in charge.
Develop a Good Rapport with Your Students

Even though you are the authoritarian in the classroom, it is extremely important to build an individual relationship with your students from the beginning. Take the extra time to find out a little about each student likes and dislikes. Getting your students to believe that you are there for them and have their best interest in mind at all times will make it easier for you to discipline them when they make a mistake. Seek out activities and methods to gain your students trust. Students can tell if you are fake or if you are genuine. If they smell a fake, then you are going to be in for a long year.

Have Clearly Defined Consequences

It is important that you establish consequences for your classroom within the first few days. How you go about that is up to you. Some teachers set the consequences themselves and others have the students assist with writing the consequences so that they take ownership of them. Establishing the consequences for poor choices early on sends a message to your students by putting to paper what will happen if they do make a poor decision. Each consequence should be clearly stated in that there is no question as to what will happen per offense. For a percentage of your students, simply knowing the consequences will keep students from making poor choices.

Stick to Your Guns

The worst thing that a teacher can do is not to follow through with the rules and consequences that you have set early on. Staying consistent with your student discipline approach will help in keeping students from repeating offenses. Teachers who do not stick to their guns often enough are the ones that struggle with classroom management. If you consistently do not follow through on your student discipline, then students will lose respect for your authority and there will be problems. Kids are smart. They will try everything to get out of being in trouble. However, if you give in, a pattern will be established, and you can bet it will be a struggle to get your students to believe that there are consequences for their actions.

© 2017 YogaKids International. All Rights Reserved
WRAPPING IT UP

Every teacher must develop their own unique classroom management plan. The five strategies discussed in this article serves as a good foundation. Teachers must remember that any successful classroom management plan includes having a positive attitude, setting expectations early, building rapport with students, having clearly defined consequences, and sticking to your guns.

*Derrick Meador is a school administrator and has been in the education field for sixteen years. He taught middle school science for seven years and has been a principal for the last nine years. Derrick's experience has been in both a middle school and elementary school setting.*
Nutrition is one of the biggest determining factors of success at school and in life. Studies have shown that a complex interrelationship exists between nutrition, socioeconomic factors, health and education. Nutritional deficiencies impact cognitive outcomes and behavior, thus affecting school performance, interaction with peers, and self-esteem. In addition, obesity in youth has adverse health implications and social repercussions.

Food preferences in children are determined by a range of biological and social factors, and are heavily influenced by parenting, advertising and marketing. While low-income households have practical barriers to healthy eating, additional socio-environmental factors (illiteracy, education and culture) also affect eating choices. Therefore, interventions designed to promote healthy eating among children should address these factors.

Many children live in families who do not have a consistent and dependable supply of healthy food. Researchers refer to this as food insecurity. Food insecurity is not the same as hunger. Food-insecure families are often able to avoid hunger by choosing cheaper, more filling food over costlier nutritious foods. For young children, the result is often a diet that provides inadequate nutrients for normal growth and development.

A family is considered food-insecure if they frequently:

- Are unable to afford balanced meals
- Reduce the size of meals because of lack of money
- Reduce the quality and variety of their normal diet due to lack of money

Food insecurity has been linked to nutrient deficiencies that lead to learning and developmental problems, especially among infants and toddlers. Long-term effects include low achievement in school, emotional problems, and poor health. A recent study finds that compared to their peers in food-secure families, food-insecure children under age 3 are:

- 90 percent more likely to have fair or poor health
- 31 percent more likely to spend time in the hospital
- 76 percent more likely to have cognitive, language and behavioral issues
Food insecurity during a child’s first years threatens brain development. Children in food insecure families are likely to have unhealthy diets and inconsistent eating habits, placing them at risk for cognitive impairment, obesity and other long-term problems. The effect of malnutrition on young children (ages 0-8) can be devastating and enduring. It can impede behavioral and cognitive development, educability, and reproductive health, creating long-term effects that undermine future productivity and emotional well-being.

The research is clear and supports yoga’s long-standing appreciation of how important diet is. Diet is a profound and often delicate subject that touches our root chakra issues of survival and family belief systems. Our goal is to inform, illuminate the challenges, and offer a foundation of what constitutes healthy nutrition. The intention is not to be directive or judgmental. We simply want to bring a level of awareness and education forward so people can make their own best choices.

Some of your students may come from families that are food insecure. And some may come from more affluent families that can afford a healthy lifestyle -- but because of lack of education, the influence of advertising, and time constraints on parents --suffer from poor nutrition as much as those that are food insecure.

**SAD (THE STANDARD AMERICAN DIET)**

You may be familiar with SAD, the Standard American Diet, a diet that is highly addictive and fails us all.

- 1 out of every 3 kids is considered overweight or obese
- Processed foods make up 70% of the American diet
- Only 7% of calories consumed by Americans are from fruits and vegetables.

So, what's in this diet? The Standard American Diet is high in many things, most of which your body doesn't need. (And it has little of what the body DOES need.) Here is a list of the most common chemicals found in the SAD diet:
• Hydrogenated oil
• High-fructose corn syrup
• Phytic acid
• Acrylamides
• Sodium Nitrate
• Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)

The Standard American Diet is full of packaged foods. Most packaged foods have virtually no nutritional value. They are colorful boxes housing calories, most of which are empty or detrimental to one's health. This leads directly to being overfed and undernourished.

The YogaKids Energy-Building, Alkaline Approach: Real Food

The old saying “you are what you eat” is close to being right -- but more accurate is that “we are what we digest and what we absorb.” It’s important that the body gets food that it is designed to digest and assimilate. And the food that is designed to be digested can be designated as “natural foods.” Natural foods mean foods without:

• refined flour
• refined sugar
• artificial additives
• artificial flavors
• artificial colors
• preservatives
• caffeine
• hydrogenated vegetable oil
• antibiotics
• hormones
• genetically modified ingredients

What does that leave? Fresh fruits and vegetables. A good rule of thumb: The food you eat should be colorful and vibrant... like you!
Changing the Family Food Culture

Good nutrition is clearly essential to healthy brain development in children. And healthy brain development is, of course, critical to learning. Healthy children are likely to:

- Perform better academically
- Feel better about themselves, their bodies and their abilities
- Cope with stress and regulate their emotions better
- Avoid feelings of low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression

So, what can be done? First, it’s important to note that children are instinctively primed to imitate their parents and caregivers. They are incredibly sensitive to the messages they are sent about eating and exercise. Parents exert the most influence on their children’s behavior just by modeling.... so, modeling healthy attitudes and habits toward food and physical activity is essential. Of course, teachers are also important role models for children. And you can help inspire and educate directly just by your example.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALKALINE FOODS</th>
<th>ACID FOODS</th>
<th>DAIRY PRODUCTS</th>
<th>DRINKS</th>
<th>OTHERS</th>
<th>DRINKS</th>
<th>CONVENIENCE FOODS</th>
<th>FATS &amp; OILS</th>
<th>FRUITS</th>
<th>SEEDS &amp; NUTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>VEGETABLES</strong></td>
<td><strong>FRUITS</strong></td>
<td><strong>MEATS</strong></td>
<td><strong>DRI</strong></td>
<td><strong>OT</strong></td>
<td><strong>OT</strong></td>
<td><strong>SWEETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>FAT</strong></td>
<td><strong>ALL</strong></td>
<td><strong>PE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artichokes</td>
<td>Avocado</td>
<td>Pork</td>
<td>Almond</td>
<td>Vineg</td>
<td>Fizzy</td>
<td>Saturated Fats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peanuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arugula</td>
<td>Coconut</td>
<td>Lamb</td>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>Hydrogenated Oils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cashew Nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asparagus</td>
<td>Grapefruit</td>
<td>Beef</td>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>Pasta</td>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>Margarine (worse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pistachio N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: Choose your music and practice the flows before your training. Feel comfortable with the movements and the timing before you train others. Provide a beautiful centerpiece for focusing; for example, river stones, flowers and yogic art.

Flow #1: Bed, Bath and Board the Bus

Objective: To set the tone for a calm, peaceful day with a 5-minute practice before teens get out of bed, shower and run to catch the bus or get in the car.

Sit up in bed. Support yourself with pillows. Three rounds each:

- Take 5
- Peace Breath (silently with hands on heart to honor yourself)
- Seated Twist
- Ride the Camel
- Neck Rolls
- Mandible Magic
- Lizard Tongue

Out of bed and onto the floor:

- Moo and Meow
- Down Dog
- Ragdoll
- Opening My Wings
- Reach for the Sun
- Tree

Flow #2: Strength Courage and Wisdom (Basic Sun Salutation)

Objective: To connect teens with their inner strength, courage and wisdom through the power of movement and breathe awareness. This is a basic Sun Salutation. Repeat on both sides.
• Mountain
• Upward Hands Mountain
• Swan Dive into Forward Bend (lift chest halfway, then Forward Bend again)
• High or Low Lunge (right leg back, lift arms and look up)
• Plank
• Knees, chest and chin to Cobra
• Downward Facing Dog
• High or Low Lunge (right leg forward, lift arms and look up)
• Forward Bend (lift chest, then fold again)
• Reverse Swam (dive up)
• Upward Hands Mountain
• Mountain

Flow #3: Strength Courage and Wisdom (Advanced Sun Salutation)

• Mountain
• Upward Hands Mountain
• Swan Forward Bend (lift chest halfway, then Forward Bend again)
• Jump back to Plank or Four Limbs Staff
• Upward Facing Dog
• Downward Facing Dog
• Jump forward to Forward Bend (lift chest and fold again)
• Reverse Swam (dive up)
• Upward Hands Mountain
• Mountain

Flow #4: Side Flow

• Warrior 2
• Triangle
• Side Angle
• Half Moon Balance
• Warrior 2

© 2017 YogaKids International. All Rights Reserved
Flow #5:
• Forward Flow
• Warrior 1
• Pyramid
• Standing Splits
• Forward Bend

Activity #1: Go with the Flow Activity
Next, we will feel empowered by our creativity and connected to our group with a vinyasa activity called “Go with the Flow.” This is a great activity for teens that have some knowledge of yoga postures. Encourage them to create their own flows to music of their choice.

Activity #2: Guts and Glory
Objective: No matter what your feelings are about new fashion trends, teens do want toned bellies! The Guts and Glory sequence strengthens the abdominal muscles. The large number of exercises reminds us that young people may prefer variety to a large quantity of reps. Please feel free to rest whenever your abs need a break. Only do a few repetitions of each exercise. For these poses, be conscious of your breath, and move your body with integrity.

• Breath of Fire/Dragon Breath
• Ride the Camel
• Sit in a cross-legged position with your hands on your knees
• Move your spine forward and backward
• Next, move side to side, and circle clockwise
• Repeat sequence counter- clockwise
• Seated Twist
• Sit in a cross-legged position
• Inhale and grow tall
• Exhale and twist to one side
• Inhale and grow tall
• Twist to the other side
**Bent Knee Plank**

- Begin in Plank
- Alternate the bending of your knees as if running in place
- Dropping knee to the floor while keeping the other leg straight
- Alternate right and left knee bends with the breath

**Cross Over Plank**

- Follow directions for “Bent Knee Plank”
- Add a twist as you bend each knee

**Progressive Boat**

- Stage 1: Bend and hold to create an obtuse angle
- Stage 2: Bend and hold to create a right angle
- Stage 3: Bend and hold to create an acute angle

**Bicycle Cross Over Exercise**

- Begin lying on the floor
- Take right elbow to left knee with twist
- Continue alternating left to right, right to left in rhythm with your breath
- Be sure to keep the neck vertebrae aligned

**Knees to Chest Back Massage**

- Gently hug knees into chest
- Squeeze as you rock back and forth to relax the abdominal muscles and massage your lower back
**Rock and Roll (Massage Part 2)**

- Increase energy and momentum rocking forward and back in sync with the breath
- Sit cross-legged and clasp big toes and roll back and forth like a ball
- Straighten legs out, up and then behind your head
- With legs overhead touch toes to the floor and hold

**Upside Down Toe-Touches**

- Lie down on your back
- Stretch legs and arms straight up toward the ceiling
- Lift shoulders off the floor and flex the feet
- Take right fingers toward left toes and left fingers toward the right toes
- Moving back and forth, alternating toe touches

**Supine Leg Circles**

- Lie on back with hands under sacrum
- Lift legs straight toward ceiling
- Create large circles clock-wise, then counter clock-wise

**Tummy Curls and Twists at Right Angle (No-Cal Curly Fries)**

- Lie on your back with hands behind your head keeping elbows flat Bend knees into right angle so calves are parallel to the floor
- Lift your head and shoulders keeping eyes focused on ceiling
- Cross right elbow to left knee, left elbow to right knee and come gently down
- Alternate and repeat with rhythmic breathing
Bridge w/ Leg Lifts

- Lie on your back bringing heels in toward buttocks
- Keep arms alongside of you (or interlace fingers)
- Come up to bridge pose by lifting the buttocks
- Hold the Bridge pose and kick leg straight up toward ceiling and then out
- Alternate leg lifts and kicks

Prepare for Savasana

- Twist and Blow
- Lemon Toes

Final Activity

Savasana with the reading, Accepting Myself, from *Spinning Inward* by Maureen Murdock. Note: While small children struggle to lie still for 2 minutes, teens love Savasana. Preteens will appreciate 10 minutes and older youths, a minimum of 15.
MATERIALS: Prepared music, balloons, bike safety photos, Sally Jean the Bicycle Queen by Cari Best, Bicycle coloring page

SHORT DESCRIPTION/TOPIC: Teach children about road safety, and help them with physical strength, balance and coordination for learning to ride a bike.

DISCUSSION POINTS
Share a few tips on bike safety:

- Always wear a helmet.
- Wear bright clothes so you are easy to see by motorists and other bicyclists.
- Avoid baggy pants that might get caught in your chain.
- Watch out for anything that might make your bike tires skid.
- Always stop and check for traffic in both directions.
- Cross at intersections.
- Walk your bike across busy intersections using the crosswalk.
- Ride on the right-hand side of the street, in the same direction as cars do.
- Don't ride too close to parked cars. Doors can open suddenly.
- Stop at all stop signs and obey traffic (red) lights just as cars do.

CONNECTING CIRCLE

Who here knows how to ride a bike? Riding a bike is a big responsibility. We’re going to talk about how to be safe on a bike. What are the benefits of riding a bike? Good exercise, fun, and it is good for the environment. Ecological Echoes, Body Benefits

Elephant Ears: Lets practice concentrating. Put on your listening ears! Quiet Quests

Objects Near and Far: When you ride a bike, you need to be aware of lots of things around you because you are moving very fast. Quiet Quests

© 2017 YogaKids International. All Rights Reserved
MUSICAL MUSINGS

Play songs about bicycles during the next part of class. Playlist recommendations: Bicycle Song by Red Hot Chili Peppers, It’s a Beautiful Day by The Beach Boys, Broken Bicycle by Tom Waits, Tour de France by Kraftwerk, Riding on My Bike by Madness, Bicycle Race by Queen

POSES AS PATHWAYS/INTEGRATE THE ELEMENTS

Three important things for riding a bike include balance, coordination, and strong legs! Let’s work on each of these. The first 5 poses we will practice will help us improve our balance. Body Benefits

Stork: Storks can’t sing the way most birds can. They can hiss or screech. They also clatter their bills together. Can you make sounds like a stork? Ecological Echoes, Laughing Language

Tree: “I am strong!” “I am beautiful!” “I am brave!” “I am awesome!” Affirmations

Warrior 3: This pose improves strength in your legs. Body Benefits

Crow: Crows have the biggest brain-to-body ratio among all bird species and their brains are like humans. Ecological Echoes, Bridge of Diamonds

Eagle: Spread your toes and make a firm base. We have 26 bones in each foot. Awesome Anatomy

The next six poses help improve our coordination:

Pedal Laughing: Pedal FAST, SLOW, pedal in really SMALL circles, in really BIG circles.

Row, Row, Row Your Boat: Continue to pedal and say, “Bertie the beetle rides a bicycle while Barry bear eats bananas!” Laughing Language

Shake Like Jelly: This pose helps us get rid of tension in our muscles. Body Benefits

Face in the Mirror: Now that we’ve practiced pedaling, we must learn how to steer our handle bars. Everyone find a partner, we’re going to practice steering our partner as if we were steering a bicycle. Bridge of Diamonds
Roller Coaster (reversed - the person at the back is going to ‘direct’ the person in front of them): And now, a very important part of riding a bike is using the breaks, you must learn how to stop quickly!

WE ALL WIN

Balloon Freeze and Flow: Same rules as freeze and flow apply – but the object will be to bat a balloon around and when the music stops, you must stop the balloon by catching it and holding it still. Modify the rules so that you can’t touch the balloon with your hands.

Let’s do some poses that will help strengthen our legs. Body Benefits

- Bug-Picking Chimp
- Popcorn
- Lightning Bolt

What are some things we do to stay safe on our bikes?

Finger Dancing: (show helmet picture) Helmets protect our heads and our brains if we fall. (Quiet Quests)

Volcano: (show traffic sign picture) When we ride bikes, we must follow traffic laws.

Seated Twist: (show photo of traffic scene) When you ride a bike, you share the road with cars, pedestrians and other bicycles. Bridge of Diamonds

Show pictures in various orders, at various speeds and have kids do the poses.

READING COMES ALIVE WITH YOGA

Sally Jean the Bicycle Queen by Cari Best. Integrate the following poses:

- Acorn to Tree (pages 1-5)
- Ladder to the Clouds (pages 7, 9, 29 and 30)

VISUAL VIGNETTES

Color the bicycle coloring page.
QUIET QUESTS

- Lemon Toes
- Fountain of Om
Hope for a better future depends on raising children without the traumas and abuses that plague so many people struggling through recovery today. These abuses often occurred at the hands of well-meaning but ignorant parents, many of whom were simply responding from their own unhealed wounds, wounds they had received from the previous generation, which may have been passed on through family and culture for many generations before that. As adults today undergo the difficult journey of healing these wounds, they understandably want to avoid at all costs, inflicting similar difficulties upon their own children.

Today’s children need intelligent guidance that supports their growth and integration in body, mind, and spirit. Finding spiritual models that can be applied to children -- models that address their development in a way that honors the different stages of a child’s life can be difficult. Schools educate the mind, but suppress the body’s natural urge to run and play.

Daniel Goleman, in his best-selling book, Emotional Intelligence, illustrates the need to educate and mature the emotions before the intellect. Some children grew up completely eschewing religion, because they were made to sit on hard pews, or read books that were intellectually beyond their understanding, and thus have no interest in spiritual matters when they are older. Others grow up to completely ignore the body, and incur health problems as a result. Still others, steer away from colleges and other intellectually demanding tasks because they grew up to believe they didn’t have the necessary intelligence, often because they were given tasks as children that were beyond the abilities of their age.

The Chakra System, based on the seven wheel-like energy centers of the body, known as chakras provides a profound mirror to the stages of childhood development. This system shows how the chakras develop sequentially, from bottom to top, as a child matures from birth to adulthood. In my personal growth seminars based on teaching this model as a way to heal adults from their past traumas and current difficulties, I am constantly asked by the parents in the audience, “I have a child who is at this stage right now. What do I do to support his development?”
This question goes beyond simply avoiding abuse -- but moves into the creation of optimal human beings. This occurs through supporting children in all dimensions of their experience – physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually – and supporting them in ways that are appropriate for their current level of development.

What follows below is a brief introduction to the chakras and their childhood developmental stages, with simple advice for parents on how to support the unfolding of these important areas in a child's life.

A. Chakra One: Womb to 1 year

1. Promote Embodiment

The most important thing you can do at this stage is to help your child come fully into her body. Frequent touch, holding, carrying, nurturing, and attendance to physical needs cannot be stressed enough. Your touch affirms your child's physicality. Your holding teaches her to hold herself. Playing with your child helps her develop motor coordination. Playing with her feet and hands, supplying toys she can grasp, playing when she's in the bath, all help stimulate motor development. Setting up an appropriate environment that is safe and comfortable, with age-appropriate toys helps the child relate to the outer world in a positive way.

2. Establish Trust by Allowing Attachment and Bonding

The child's only source of safety is through attachment to the primary caregiver. It is important for the mother (or father if he is primary parent) to be there as consistently as possible during the first year as a ground for the child. This means picking her up when she cries, frequently holding and cuddling her, talking to her, protecting her from loud noises, hunger, cold, or discomfort, and feeding her when she's hungry, rather than by a schedule.

Some parents have difficulty allowing this attachment to form, because the child's natural neediness feels too demanding. Allowing this attachment to occur helps the child become more independent later.
Consistency of presence during infancy helps to reconcile the dilemma of trust vs. mistrust in a way that brings hope and confidence. Knowing that the parent is always there allows the child to relax into the development that needs to occur, rather than rise into tension and hypervigilance.

3. Appropriate Day Care

If the mother needs to work during the first year and can’t be there with her child, she leaves her child at a disadvantage. Unfortunately, financial circumstances often make this the only option.

The best parents can do is provide the healthiest child care possible, acting as advocates to make sure the child gets the care she needs. Making sure the child is touched frequently and appropriately, fed on demand, and cared for by competent adults in an age-appropriate environment are a few things the parents can look into when finding day care. Spending time at the day care with her child until she gets used to it is also helpful. Family day care and in-home babysitting are more likely to offer continuity and consistency, when possible.

In addition, the mother needs to understand that the child may need extra nurturing, touch, and mother-child bonding in the evening at home. This is especially demanding on single and/or working mothers who are often exhausted at the end of the day. Yet, time taken for nurturing during the first year pays off in the long run with a calmer and healthier child who makes less demands later. A feeling of safety comes from a safe environment. Peace in the home, protection from loud noises, sharp objects, falling, cold, and violence of adults or siblings is essential.

Remember, environment is self to the infant. What they are embedded in is the first influence on who they are. When a child is in an unfamiliar environment, such as a store, a park, a doctor’s office, or a friend’s house, the parent is an island of safety for the child. Understand that your child will be more insecure, and need to come to you again and again for reassurance.
4. Healthy Nourishment

Feeding schedules, though convenient for the parent, do not allow the child to establish her own rhythms, nor do they teach her that the world will respond to her needs. Breast feeding has been proven to be healthier emotionally and physically, as breast milk contains important antibodies, and the experience of breast feeding promotes mother child bonding, through physical closeness. But studies have shown that the emotional state of the mother while feeding is actually more important than whether it comes from a breast or a bottle. A bottle given lovingly is better than a breast given resentfully.

Healthy nutrition on the part of the mother, refraining from harmful substances that flow into the milk, such as drugs and alcohol, and healthy nutrition when the child begins eating food are also essential to building a healthy body. If you successfully handle this stage, you will give your child a healthy foundation from which to meet the many challenges that life will bring. She will have a sense of her own body and aliveness, and a sense of hope and optimism that the world can and will meet her needs.

B. Chakra Two: 6 to 18 months

1. Allow Separations and Attachment

Your child will now be in the hatching stage, beginning to separate from you as a parent as his body development allows him more and more movement. Because this is scary to him, he will go back and forth -- moving away and coming back to see if everything's OK. In some ways he will seem even more attached, and this is natural. It is important to support both these movements -- to encourage the separation by offering safe opportunities to explore, and by being warm and loving when reassurance is needed.

2. Provide Sensate Environments

Your child is exploring the world through his senses. This is his main mode of experience right now. It is important to provide colors and sounds, interesting toys, touch and pleasure through play, and a safe environment to explore. Your voice and attention are a major part of the sensate experience.
3. Support Exploration Through Movement

Your child wants to move about right now. This is not the time for a playpen, and if you must use one, use it only for short periods of time. Instead, find places where he can crawl and walk about safely, where he can run in the park, roll around in the yard, and learn to use his body in its newfound joy of movement.

4. Reflect Emotions

Your child is learning his emotional language. If you want to teach emotional literacy, it’s important to mirror his feelings. Be responsive to his cries and expressions of rage, fear, need or confusion. Don’t negate or punish him for his emotions -- he can’t help what he feels. Reflect words to show him you understand: “How sad you look right now!” “Are you scared? Do you want Mommy to hold your hand?”

Though he can’t speak very well yet, he is beginning to understand words by listening. He will understand that his feelings have a name and that even without language he can communicate to someone what he needs or wants.

Be aware of your own emotional needs and states, as well as the emotional “field” in the household. Children pick up our rage and fear, anxiety and joy. Take care of your needs as much as possible so your unresolved emotions are not projected onto the innocent child.

C. Chakra Three: 18 months to 3 years

1. Support Autonomy and Willfulness

As your child begins to separate, celebrate her independence. Try to support her in her willfulness, hard as it might be, by offering choices whenever possible. Instead of asking, “Do you want Cheerios?” “No!” “Do you want corn flakes?” “No!” “Do you want oatmeal?” “No!” and then getting exasperated, you can say “Do you want Cheerios, corn flakes, or oatmeal?” Or you can pick out two suitable outfits to wear, and give her a chance to choose. Give your child opportunities to feel willful in ways that are safe and appropriate.
2. Encourage Self-Esteem

As the ego identity is forming at this stage, be sure to take delight in your child's accomplishments and make her feel appreciated. Support her independence without rejecting her. If you give your child tasks that she can successfully accomplish, she will develop confidence. Age-appropriate puzzles and toys, small jobs around the house, like putting toys in a box or picking up stuffed animals can help to foster a basic sense of confidence. If she insists on doing a task that is beyond her abilities, such as tying her shoes, help her accomplish it. By all means, refrain from getting critical or overly frustrated by her awkward attempts to do simple things. Have patience. It will pay off in the long run.

3. Successful Toilet Training

Your child will indicate to you when she's ready for toilet training. She will show an interest in the toilet and adult bathroom activities. She may tell you when she's wet or resist diapers when you're putting them on. She will stay dry for longer periods of time. Sphincter muscles are not capable of holding on until the child is 18 months to 2 years. It may not be until age 3 that she can go all night without a diaper. If you wait until the time is right, she will feel a sense of pride over this new adult behavior, rather than engage in a fruitless battle of wills.

Rewards for successful behavior go farther than punishments for mistakes, which only create shame. Find treats that can be given as reinforcers, as well as hugging, clapping and verbal appreciation.

4. Appropriate Discipline

In supporting your child's autonomy and will, you obviously cannot relinquish all control. There need to be appropriate limits, firmly given. Your child cannot understand sophisticated reasoning, but simple cause and effect statements, like: “Doggie bites! Don't touch!” can be understood. Severe punishment teaches aggressive behavior and fosters shame. Withdrawal of love puts the third and fourth chakras at odds, and stimulates the child's insecurity and need for approval.
Instead, try to divert your child’s attention to something more appropriate. If you take the remote channel changer out of her mouth, don’t yell at her when she cries. Give her something else to hold. Remove her from dangerous situations. Limits set firmly and consistently for short periods of time (such as time out in one’s room alone for a few minutes) can be more effective than anger or withdrawal. Children are highly sensitive to parent’s approval at this stage. When you must, disapprove of the behavior and not the child.

D. Chakra Four Ages 4 - 7

1. Pay Attention to How You Model Relationships

Children at this age are learning about social roles by identification and imitation. “Parental identification allows children to feel that their parents are with them even when not physically present.” This means your child will internalize your behavior as a part of himself. If you are angry and aggressive, you will teach him to be angry and aggressive in his relationship with himself and others. As he grows into an awareness of relationships around him, model balanced, loving relationships for him to observe and be a part of.

2. Model Empathy and Moral Behavior

Identification with you as parent will also give him a basis for moral behavior. Explain to him why you do certain things and refrain from others. “We’re going to take cookies to Mrs. Smith, because she’s all alone and it will make her feel better.” “See how the baby likes it when you smile at her?” “We don’t eat candy before dinner because it doesn’t leave room for the food that makes bones and muscles.”

Also, be aware that you are modeling gender behavior. Be careful not to support overly sexist or narrow interpretations of how men or women behave. Treat your boy and girl children with equal affection, responsibility, and respect. Allow your child to see a wide range of acceptable behavior. Let your daughter be aware of models of strong women. Let your son know that he won’t lose his masculinity by showing his softer feelings.
3. Explain relationships.

Your child is trying to understand how everything he discovers goes with everything else. The more you can explain such relationships, the more secure he will feel. “We put the puzzle away, so we don’t lose the pieces.” “We put gas in the car, so it will take us where we want to go, just like food gives us energy to run around.” “Mommy has to work so she can get money to buy food.” Routine can be very important. If routine is interrupted explain why. “We can’t go to the ark today because Aunt Mary is coming to visit.”

4. Support Peer Relationships

Your child can now relate to children his own age, with supervision. If he’s not in school yet, find ways to get him together with other children. If he is in school, ask him about the other kids he interacts with. Find opportunities to foster friendships outside of school.

E. Chakra Five: Ages 7 - 12

1. Support Communication

Your child has a solid command of language now. Help her use it. Have long discussions with her about the nature of the world. Encourage her to ask questions and take time to answer them. Ask her questions about herself, her feelings and her friends that she can talk about. Be an attentive listener. Cognitive learning is enormous at this period. School is the major arena for learning and development of confidence. Show interest in your child’s studies. Help her with her homework. Ask questions, supply added information, share what you know. Get involved in school projects. Model good study habits. Give rewards for good performance.

2. Stimulate Creativity

Success is the greatest motivator for developing competence. Supply your child with creative opportunities for industrious expression: art supplies, musical instruments, crafts, dance classes. Model the creative thinking process by searching for new ways to do things, even if it's something as mundane as setting the table.
Teach her to use tools. Stimulate creativity with books and movies, concerts and plays. When your child presents you with something she has created, be sure to appreciate it, even if it only looks like a silly blob. This teaches her that her creations have value, and supports her creative identity. Show the drawing to others; put it up on the refrigerator; invite grandma to the school play.

3. Expose to Larger World

Take your child to new places. A trip to the museum, street fairs, the zoo, a traveling vacation, a campout in the mountains. Allow exposure to different ways of life and encourage her horizons to expand.

F. Chakra Six: Adolescence

1. Support Identity Formation

Your adolescent is now searching for his own identity. This is not a time to become controlling over details that are not of direct harm, such as hair, clothing, or harmless activities, such as listening to music. Respect his expression of individuality. Encourage his own thinking by asking questions rather than giving answers. Instead of telling him what you did when you were his age, ask what he might tell his son if he were a father.

The roles he tries on will change many times before he settles into his adult identity. Don't worry about the ones you don't like. To strongly oppose it strengthens the likelihood that it will last longer.

2. Support Independence

Allow your child to have more of his own life. Encourage ways he can earn his own money, take responsibility for more aspects of his life, such as buying clothes, having his own transportation, creating activities. Let him make some of his own mistakes. If he feels you believe in him, he will more likely behave responsibly.
3. Set Clear Boundaries

Adolescents nevertheless must have a clear and consistent sense of limits. As they are now old enough for sophisticated reasoning, it is important to include them in the thinking behind those limits, even to the point of letting them suggest alternative ways to address these limits.

My son, for example, got an F in English his first quarter of high school. He immediately lost television and computer privileges until the next grading period. Six weeks later, with four weeks left before the next report card was issued, he asked if he could resume some privileges by getting a note from his English teacher that said how much better he was doing. He took the initiative and brought home a note saying he was now doing “A” quality work. I rewarded him for the improvement by reinstating some privileges on a probationary basis.

G. Chakra Seven: Early Adulthood and Beyond

Seventh chakra modeling actually occurs throughout childhood. By the time your son or daughter is truly at the seventh chakra stage, they are on their own and your influence will be minimal. But here are some general principles to practice beforehand:

1. Stimulate Questioning

Ask don’t tell. If your home is a safe place to question and discuss values, your child will learn to think for herself. If she is taught to think through her own problems, with support, learning that there may be many answers to a single situation, she will be more open minded. Involving her in intellectual discussions and asking for her opinion makes her feel that her thought processes are worthwhile.

2. Offer Spiritual Variety

Spirituality should not be forced on your child. It is better instituted by modeling conscious behavior, and sharing what you can as there is interest. In addition to exposing your child to whatever religion you practice, you can make their spirituality even more solid by giving them some exposure to other religions as well. Explain why your family has chosen the religion you practice.
Allow your child to research other cultures and styles of worship. If your religion is best for her, she will come back to it on her own, more solid in her commitment because she’s been offered choice. If she chooses another that she finds more fulfilling, it will be an informed choice, rather than a rebellious act.

3. Provide Opportunities for Education

Learning is the way we feed our seventh chakra and keep our operating system up-to-date. Support learning in whatever way you can, whether it's attending local community college, weekend workshops, a trek to the Himalayas, or a self-imposed course of study. Teach your child to find the lessons in experience. Ask what she’s learning from different activities.

4. Let Go

When it's time for your young adult to leave home, support and celebrate their independence. It doesn't help to hang on, nor does it help to push her out the door. As the parent withdraws control and attachment, the young person will naturally gravitate out into her own world.

H. Conclusion

As children grow up through the chakras, they don't immediately outgrow the needs of the previous chakra. Children need physical affection all through life, not just in the first and second chakras. They need continual approval for their self-esteem. They need to be talked to, engaged with, and included in family councils and activities.

In my opinion, there is never justification for parents to inflict upon their children sexual activity, physical pain, or shaming criticism. If this occurs, find help for yourself immediately through local parent support groups or your own therapy. Break the cycle. Don't pass on abuse.
Children need love and attention, time and approval. They need to be encouraged, not discouraged. They need to be part of adult society, and they need their individuality to reform that society in ways that are in better harmony with the body, soul, and spirit. Children are the sacred beings of the future. They are the hope of humankind.

Anodea Judith, Ph.D. is the founder and director of Sacred Centers, and a groundbreaking thinker, writer, and spiritual teacher. She holds Masters and Doctoral degrees in Psychology and Human Health, with lifelong studies of alternative medicine, yoga, mythology, history, sociology, systems theory, and mystic spirituality. She is considered the country's foremost experts on the combination of chakras and therapeutic issues and on the interpretation of the Chakra System for the Western lifestyle. She spends much of her time on the road teaching, with workshops and trainings offered across the U.S., Europe and Central America.
The Anatomical Planes

In anatomy, the body can be viewed according to anatomical planes. You can imagine a plane as a pane of glass that cuts through the body at a specific angle.

The Sagittal Plane crosses through the body to create a left and right side. Body movements that we can make that do not cut across the Sagittal Plane are occurring “in the sagittal plane” and can be thought of as movements going forward and backward. (Possible movements include running, squats, and forward bends.)

Another anatomical plane is called the Frontal Plane, and it crosses through the body to create a front and back. Body movements that we can make that do not cut across the Frontal Plane are occurring “in the frontal plane” and can be thought of as movements going side-to-side. (Possible movements include jump ‘n jacks and cartwheels.)

The Transverse Plane crosses through the body to create a top and bottom. Body movements that do not cut across the Transverse Plane are occurring “in the transverse plane” and can be thought of as rotational movement. (Possible movements include spinal twists.)

Movements in each anatomical plane can be further categorized. Movements in the Sagittal Plane are either flexion or extension movements, depending on the angle created between two body parts. Flexion decreases the angle and extension increases the angle. Doing bicep curls is an example of performing flexion and extension movements.

Movements in the Frontal Plane can be called either abduction or adduction movements, depending on the direction of the body part in relation to the mid-line of the body. Abduction is taking the body part away from the mid-line and adduction is moving it towards the mid-line. Doing the splits is an example of performing abduction.

Movements in the Transverse Plane can be called either internal or external rotation, depending on the direction of the body part in relation to the mid-line of the body. Internal rotation is moving it closer to the mid-line and external rotation is moving it away from the mid-line. Sit and Twist is a partner pose where each person is moving their bodies in internal and external rotation.
Why are the astronomical planes important? One reason is because an overreliance on one type of movement can cause injury —- while moving in all three planes can help prevent injury and improve range of motion. Yoga asanas are great tools for people to experience all three anatomical planes of movement.

**Bones and Remodeling**

Humans, at birth, have 270 bones. Some bones are fused together, and -- by adulthood -- the human body has 206 bones. Bones are living tissue, in a constant cycle of destruction and renewal called remodeling. Bone loss occurs when there’s an imbalance in the remodeling. And this imbalance can lead to osteoporosis.

Like other weight-bearing activities, yoga can help prevent bone loss by increasing the rate of renewal in the remodeling process.
Major Muscle Groups

There are 11 major muscle groups in the body. Knowing which asanas work which muscles is an essential skill to have as a yoga instructor. Variety is important – as muscle groups can easily be overused, resulting in discomfort or injury. Keep in mind that most yoga asanas work multiple muscle groups at the same time.

Below is a list of the 11 major muscle groups:

- Quadriceps
- Hamstrings
- Calves
- Chest
- Back
- Shoulders
- Triceps
- Biceps
- Forearms
- Trapezius
- Abs
Sensory Processing Disorder

Sensory processing (sometimes called “sensory integration” or SI) is a term that refers to the way the nervous system receives messages from the senses and turns them into appropriate motor and behavioral responses. Whether you are biting into a hamburger, riding a bicycle, or reading a book, your successful completion of the activity requires processing sensation or “sensory integration.” SPD, formerly known as “sensory integration dysfunction,” is a condition that exists when sensory signals don't get organized into appropriate responses. SPD is like a neurological “traffic jam” that prevents certain parts of the brain from receiving the information needed to interpret sensory information correctly. A person with SPD finds it difficult to process and act upon information received through the senses, which creates challenges in performing countless everyday tasks. Motor clumsiness, behavioral problems, anxiety, depression, school failure, and other impacts may result if the disorder is not treated effectively.

What does SPD look like?
Sensory Processing Disorder can affect people in only one sense—for example, just touch or just sight or just movement—or in multiple senses. One person with SPD may over-respond to sensation and find clothing, physical contact, light, sound, food, or other sensory input to be unbearable. Another might under-respond and show little or no reaction to stimulation, even pain or extreme hot and cold. In children whose sensory processing of messages from the muscles and joints is impaired, posture and motor skills can be affected. These are the “floppy babies” who worry new parents and the kids who get called “klutz” and “spaz” on the playground. Still other children exhibit an appetite for sensation that is in perpetual overdrive. These kids often are misdiagnosed - and inappropriately medicated - for ADHD.

Suggested YogaKids Pose: Lemon Toes
A Disc Jockey (DJ) has a mixing board full of dials and knobs. Yoga teaches kids how to adjust their volume, change channels, or add some bass to their mixing boards. Children with difficulty processing sensory input aren’t easily able to access all these knobs and dials.
All children and adults at all levels of sensory functioning benefit from the strengthening, balancing, and toning effect yoga has on the nervous system. The sensory system is soothed, and the relaxation response (parasympathetic dominance) is engaged in forward folds; deep, even breathing; progressive relaxation (tensing then releasing each muscle group); and deep relaxation. Children with SPD might like to put sandbags on their bodies for final rest.

**Down Syndrome**
Down syndrome is a genetic disorder caused when abnormal cell division results in extra genetic material from chromosome 21. This genetic disorder, which varies in severity, causes lifelong intellectual disability and developmental delays, and in some people, it causes health problems. Down syndrome is the most common genetic chromosomal disorder and cause of learning disabilities in children. Each person with Down syndrome is an individual — intellectual and developmental problems range from mild to moderate, and some people are healthy while others have severe health problems such as serious heart defects.

**What does Down Syndrome look like?**
- Shorter limbs and smaller stature
- flat feet, weak ankles, unstable knee caps
- low muscle tone
- excessive flexibility
- respiratory problems
- thyroid dysfunction
- digestive ailments

**Suggested YogaKids Pose: Chanting**
Sound therapy through chanting, mantras, drumming, etc. is especially beneficial. Sound vibrations have healing qualities and children respond readily to any activities involving instruments or singing. Yoga practice also stresses breathing exercises or pranayama. These exercises will help ease pulmonary hypertension and provide a safe workout for children with congenital heart defects often associated with DS. In addition, they will ease nasal congestion and help protect against pulmonary problems and infections by building the immune system. Relaxation techniques, such as guided imagery and progressive muscle relaxation, are especially enjoyable during Corpse Pose.
More Suggested YogaKids Poses
Children with Down Syndrome have hypotonia, which is low muscle tone. Yoga poses are great to strengthen those muscles.

- Standing Poses: Mountain, Tree, Kite, Triangle, Half Moon
- Seated Poses: Seated Twist, Twist and Blow, Lotus, Moo and Meow, Down Diggity Doggie Down, Table of Contents and Butterfly
- Bridge and Shoulder Stand help stimulate the thyroid gland, but if atlantoaxial instability exists, shoulder stand or any weight bearing pose on the head or neck should be avoided.

Suggested Breathing Exercises
Sipping Breath (while in L sitting pose, inhale small breaths to sit up straight, exhale into a forward bend), Volcano Breath, Blowing Bubbles (helps the child take deeper inhalations)

Autism
Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and autism are both general terms for a group of complex disorders of brain development. These disorders are characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviors. ASD can be associated with intellectual disability, difficulties in motor coordination and attention and physical health issues such as sleep and gastrointestinal disturbances. Some persons with ASD excel in visual skills, music, math and art. Autism appears to have its roots in very early brain development. However, the most obvious signs of autism and symptoms of autism tend to emerge between 2 and 3 years of age. Each individual with autism is unique. About 40 percent have average to above average intellectual abilities. Indeed, many persons on the spectrum take deserved pride in their distinctive abilities and “atypical” ways of viewing the world. Others with autism have significant disability and are unable to live independently. About 25 percent of individuals with ASD are nonverbal but can learn to communicate using other means.

What does autism look like?
There’s an expression: “If you’ve met one person with autism, you’ve met one person with autism.” The appearance of autism can vary from person to person.
One person with autism may be very verbal, bright and engaged, while another is non-verbal, intellectually challenged and almost entirely self-absorbed.

In addition, people with autism seem to be more prone to other problems not listed in the diagnostic criteria. These problems include sensory dysfunction, sleep disorders, self-abusive behavior and more. The only symptoms all people with autism do have in common across the spectrum are challenges, disabilities, or delays in social communication.

**Suggested YogaKids Pose: Freeze and Flow**
Since these children are visually oriented, add a visual element so that the child has a colored picture of each pose near his or her mat. Also give parents pictures of the poses so they can do the poses at home with their child. Massage, music, dance, rhymes and stories are also beneficial. Music engages the brain and promotes communication. Massage aids in relaxation and facilitates the giving and receiving of affection. Being able to dance about in contrast to the stationary poses of yoga, and the addition of the language element of rhymes and stories, complete what amounts to amazing and fun intervention.

**More Suggested YogaKids Poses**
Spinal Rolls, Helicopter, Down Diggity Doggie Down, Cat, Cow, Tree.

**Suggested Calming Poses**
Butterfly, Recline Butterfly, Child's Pose (with weighted pillow on lower back), Spinal Twist, Twist and Blow, Tortilla Roll, Corpse (with weighted vest)

**Suggested Breathing Exercises**
Volcano Breath, Take 5 Breath, Switch Breath, Beezing Breath

**Cerebral Palsy**
Cerebral palsy is a disorder of movement, muscle tone or posture that is caused by an insult to the immature, developing brain, most often before birth.

The effect of cerebral palsy on functional abilities varies greatly. Some people can walk while others are not. Some people show normal to near normal intellectual function, but others may have intellectual disabilities. Epilepsy, blindness or
deafness also may be present. People with cerebral palsy often have underlying developmental brain abnormalities.

What does Cerebral Palsy look like?

- Variations in muscle tone, such as being either too stiff or too floppy
- Stiff muscles and exaggerated reflexes (spasticity)
- Stiff muscles with normal reflexes (rigidity)
- Lack of muscle coordination (ataxia)
- Tremors or involuntary movements
- Delays in reaching motor skills milestones, such as pushing up on arms, sitting up alone or crawling
- Favoring one side of the body, such as reaching with only one hand or dragging a leg while crawling
- Difficulty walking, such as walking on toes, a crouched gait, a scissors-like gait with knees crossing or a wide gait
- Excessive drooling or problems with swallowing
- Delays in speech development or difficulty speaking
- Difficulty with precise motions, such as picking up a crayon or spoon

Suggested YogaKids Pose: Twist and Blow

Holding an asana gives the muscles and tendons a relaxing stretch, releasing overall stress and tightness throughout the musculature and around the joints. While asanas are relaxing the body, they also provide just enough resistance to exercise low muscle tone areas of the body. In this way asanas improve both high and low muscle tone problems in children with cerebral palsy. Perhaps the most important aspect of asana practice for children with cerebral palsy is its ability to stretch and realign the spine. Asanas flex and twist the spine in all directions. This helps to create more space between the vertebrae and reduce pressure on the disks and nerves that radiate out of the spine.

Reducing the pressure on these radial nerves facilitates the release of muscular tension throughout the body and enhances overall nerve function. As a result, the child can develop a greater range of movement and coordination, as well as greater independence.

More Suggested YogaKids Poses

All poses depend on child's balancing ability. Tip: A picture or a stuffed animal on the floor in front of the child serves as a great focal point while balancing.
Standing Poses: Mountain, Tree, Forward Folds, Kite

Seated Poses: Butterfly, Spinal Twist, Twist and Blow, Bridge, Knees to Chest, Leg Extensions, Table of Contents, Moo and Meow

**Suggested breathing exercises**
Take 5 Breath, Volcano, Beezing Breath, Bunny Breath

**ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)**
ADHD is a common condition that affects children and adolescents and can continue into adulthood for some. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) estimates that 3% to 5% of children have ADHD. Some experts, though, say ADHD may occurs in 8% to 10% of school aged children. Experts also question whether kids really outgrow ADHD. What that means is that this disorder may be more common in adults than previously thought. Children with ADHD generally have problems paying attention or concentrating. They can’t seem to follow directions and are easily bored or frustrated with tasks. They also tend to move constantly and are impulsive, not stopping to think before they act. These behaviors are generally common in children. But they occur more often than usual and are more severe in a child with ADHD. The behaviors that are common with ADHD interfere with a child’s ability to function at school and at home.

**What does ADHD look like?**
Symptoms of ADHD in children are generally grouped into three categories: inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness.

**Inattention -- A child with ADHD...**

- is easily distracted.
- does not follow directions or finish tasks.
- does not appear to be listening when someone is speaking.
- does not pay attention and makes careless mistakes.
- is forgetful about daily activities.
- has problems organizing daily tasks.
- avoids or dislikes activities that require sitting still or a sustained effort.
- often loses things, including personal items.
- tends to daydream.
Hyperactivity -- A child with ADHD...
• often squirms, fidgets, or bounces when sitting.
• does not stay seated as expected.
• has difficulty playing quietly.
• is always moving, such as running or climbing on things. (In teens and adults, this is more commonly described as a sense of restlessness.)
• talks excessively.

Impulsivity -- A child with ADHD...
• has difficulty waiting for his or her turn.
• blurts out answers before the question has been completed.
• often interrupts others.

Suggested YogaKids Pose: Ragdoll Ann and Ragdoll Andy (Shake Like Jelly)
Certain yoga poses are particularly well-suited for children with ADHD because of their calming nature, such as restorative and forward bend poses. Forward bends lengthen and deepen each breath, they increase calming exhalations.

More Suggested YogaKids Poses
Sun Salutations, Mountain, Down Diggity Doggie Down, Tree, Moo and Meow, Triangle, Cobra

Suggested Calming Poses
Butterfly Pose, Reclining Butterfly, Legs up the Wall, Seated Twists, Twist and Blow, Child’s Pose and Corpse Pose

Suggested breathing exercises
Take 5 Breath, Volcano Breath, Hot Air Balloon, Switch Breath

The Different Types of Yoga Benefits
Sensory
Breathing, mantra, mudra, and meditation all have a soothing and regulatory effect on the nervous system. In an overstimulating world, many kids need strategies for coping. The potential of yogic breath control to revitalize the nervous system is enormous. Breathing practices we teach children will help soothe and balance the
whole nervous system while facilitating the relaxation response. Suggested YogaKids Pose: Take 5 Breath

**Physical**
Better body awareness is one of the greatest benefits of a yoga practice for kids with special needs. Children get excellent proprioceptive and vestibular input through partner poses, walking around like chimps and dogs (hands and feet on the floor), and in twisting poses that compress the muscles. Standing and balancing poses help develop stability, strength, and coordination. Poses such as tree and eagle, provide much needed joint compression. Moving from backbends to forward bends to twists gives the vestibular system rich input, which helps a child feel calm and grounded. This all makes it easier for children to feel more comfortable and present in their body. Suggest pose: Warrior Series with Affirmations

**Mental/Emotional**
Scientifically, the mental benefits of children’s yoga result from calming the heart rate, which signals the brain to activate the parasympathetic nervous system response. Body systems such as circulation, glandular balance, digestion, and immunity are also enhanced. Because children are subject to sensory overload, just like adults, the sympathetic nervous system (“fight or flight”) is often engaged and creates stress. The activation of the parasympathetic nervous system that takes place in yoga can reduce stress and increase the ability to focus and learn. Balancing the body’s systems has a great impact on mental perspective. Our perception opens when we feel at ease and safe. Yoga helps children develop a greater sense of self, a feeling of more ease in the world, and a sense that “everything is okay just as it is.” Yoga helps kids feel empowered, gives them the courage to speak up, be listened to, and receive support. Suggest pose: Talking Turtle

**Social**
Yoga improves confidence and social skills. Poor coordination often yields low self-esteem as kids may be singled out or teased for not moving or behaving like other children, or not excelling in sports and outdoor activities. By learning self-control and self-calming techniques through yoga, they are likely to grow confidence in interacting with other children and refine their social skills. Learning to work
together in a yoga class and playing with partner poses can also increase confidence within group settings. Suggest Pose: Doggie and Master

**Energetic**
Arousal can be considered a state of the nervous system, describing how alert one feels. To attend, concentrate, and perform tasks in a manner suitable to the situational demands, one's nervous system must be in an optimal state of arousal for that task. Self-regulation is the ability to attain, maintain and change arousal appropriately for a task or situation. We have listed self-regulation activities in 5 categories and give a pose example for each.

**Pose Suggestions**
- Oral motor input: Beezing
- Movement (vestibular input): Shake like Jelly
- Touch (Tactile Input): ABC Backrub
- Look (visual input): Eyes Near and Far
- Listen (auditory Input): Chanting

**Yoga Props**
- Eye bags: May use during Savasana Pose or during meditation. Avoid strong smells as some children are very sensitive to smells.
- Weighted pillows: Great to use with children with Autism. The deep pressure helps them regulate and calm themselves. Weighted pillows can be used during different YogaKids poses such as Child's Pose, Butterfly Pose, Pigeon Pose or Savasana.
- Weighted vests: Useful for children who get agitated or need sensory control. A weighted vest may also useful for children with Autism.
- Sensory Break Box: Sometimes children with special needs need a break. Fill a box with different items such as stress balls, squishy hand toys, spinning tops, yoyo, small toys that light up, etc. Children can take a break, so they can re-center themselves.
Blankets: Great to use during Savasana. Children may also roll up in Enchilada pose or Count Dracula pose using a blanket, or at the end of class for a sensory break.

**Tips for Teaching Children with Special Needs**

**Tip #1: Speak to the parent, teacher or caregiver prior to the class.**
Ask some of the following questions. Then, incorporate strategies based on the answers. (For example, include specific topics in the lesson that resonate with the child.)

- What should I know about this child before he/she participates in a class?
- Are there any contraindications, movements or activities to avoid?
- What are 3 things this child/young adult loves to do?
- What do you feel is the best way for me to connect with this person?
- Does this individual have any sensory sensitivity?
- What are the physical limitations this person has?
- Does the child have any allergies or asthma?
- About how long can the child tolerate movement, activity and instruction?

**Tip #2: When the child has sensory sensitivity, you can adjust your sessions to meet those needs in the following ways:**

- Make sure the lighting isn’t too harsh.
- Music may have to be at a lower volume, less excitatory, and more rhythmic.
- Voice tone can make a difference in gaining attention.
- The child’s comfort comes first; if the child wants his/her shoes left on, that’s fine.
- Some visual activities may be over stimulating; adjust them as necessary. The children’s voices on some poses (Lion Pose, for instance) may need to be adjusted.

**Tip #3: Give lots of encouragement and verbal direction during the class.**

Specific positive feedback is best, such as “I liked it when you watched me before you tried Flamingo” versus “You are doing well.” This will help shape future
behavior. Also, verbally set the goal before any activity: “We are going to do the Butterfly with Antennae pose.” Always tell the student who needs physical guidance how, where and why you may be touching or moving them. Count while holding a pose.

**Tip #4: Provide consistency, predictability, and simplicity in your lessons.**
Start and end the same way each time. For example, start your class with the YogaKids pledge and end with the Namaste song. When adding new poses, couple them with familiar ones. For students with a diagnosis of Asperger’s, autism and ADHD, predictability is important. Use a dry erase board to delineate each part of the session. Cross out each as completed to give a sense of time passing. Sometimes written words or pictures are easier forms of information to process versus the human voice. A visual timer can also be useful. Also, break down poses into several small steps. Then, give one-step commands using simple language.

**Tip #5: Offer the YogaKids DVDs so they can practice at home.**
This will help your students get more comfortable and familiar with the poses.

**Tip #6: Take advantage of props.**
Some of these children may have low muscle tone, decreased core strength or poor balance. Utilize props to help provide stability or pose modifications (bean bags, mats, rolled towels, chairs, pillows, straps, the wall, therapy balls, blocks, non-latex stretch bands, etc.) to help hold poses. Make modifications to the poses when necessary.

**Tip #7: Model the movements and use “mirroring.”**
Model everything for the children, then give a longer processing time for them to initiate the action before intervening. Also, mirroring can be a successful technique. Pair kids up so they can imitate each other in the poses.

**Tip #8: Provide plenty of visuals.**
Using visuals (pictures of animals, nature or landscapes) can help with guided imagery. When reading, sit next to the student. Point out the pictures, giving extra time for visual processing. Enlarge materials in case of visual impairment.

**Tip #9: Use “chill-out” strategies.**
Encourage relaxing in Child’s Pose or another pose that feels good if the child needs to re-group. Designate a space for “chilling out” (no more than 30 seconds to a minute, initially). Engage in progressive relaxation prior to reduced motor portions of the session (reading or Savasana). Also, provide a “fidget” (squeeze ball, beanie baby, a straw for mouth input, etc.) to hold during these times.

**Tip #10: Focus on the process and not the product.**
Teach as many classes with the same children as possible; this will allow you the time to make the right modifications based on your own experiences. And remember: Enjoy the moment, use your intuition, think outside the box, meet the individual where they are, and have fun. This is truly teaching the YogaKids way.
Joints

The site at which two or more bones meet is called a joint. There are three main types of joints: fibrous (immoveable joints), cartilaginous (partially moveable joints) and synovial (freely moveable joints).

The synovial joints are further divided into different categories:

- **hinge**
  - example: ankle, elbow, knee
  - type of movement: flexion and reflexive
  - movement occurs in the Sagittal Plane

- **pivot**
  - example: first and second vertebrae of the neck
  - type of movement: internal and external rotation
  - movement occurs in the Transverse Plane

- **ball and socket**
  - example: hip
  - type of movement: abduction, adduction, flexion, extension, internal and external rotation
  - movement occurs in the Frontal, Sagittal, Transverse

- **saddle**
  - example: the carpometacarpal joint of the thumb
  - type of movement: flexion, extension, abduction, adduction
  - movement occurs in the Sagittal and Frontal Plane
• codyloid
  example: wrist
  type of movement: flexion, extension, abduction, adduction
  movement occurs in the Sagittal and Frontal Plane

• gliding
  example: specific bones in the wrist and ankle
  type of movement: gliding movements
  movement occurs in any direction along the plane of the joint

Understanding how the human joints are supposed to move as architected can help you with teach the asanas with precision and help your students avoid injury.

Alignment

The world “alignment” is used often by many yoga teachers. But what does it mean?
One definition of alignment is simply, “the positioning of the body in a way that allows for the full benefit of the pose while avoiding injury.” It’s valuable to understand that alignment, as defined in this way, is a subjective quality – not some fixed, perfect point. We like this quote from Colin Hall:

“Alignment is important—but not alignment for alignment’s sake. Alignment is a tool that we use to produce particular results. However, the results are what we value, not the tool. Spending our time trying to ‘get it right’ confuses the ends and means of yoga practice.” - Colin Hall, author of “Alignment Matters in Yoga” from Elephant Journal

While some schools of yoga are founded on principles of alignment, YogaKids is primarily concerned with the concept as it serves our students in injury prevention. Knowledge of proper alignment, along with an understanding of the joints and anatomical planes, will help you keep your students safe.
Elaine breathes slowly, in and out, for a few rounds of simple pranayama before she has to stop. Images too scary for her to describe race in and overwhelm her. After a few moments, with Jocelyn Jenkins, her therapist, sitting next to her, Elaine tries again. Several sessions later they move on to very basic, very slow sun salutations; she becomes aware of her muscles, noticing any resistance in her body, stopping when she gets too agitated.

Although these postures and breathing exercises sound easy and soothing for most of us, they represent enormous progress for Elaine (not her real name), who cut herself off from any connection with her body or her emotions years ago. Jenkins remembers the first time she met her. Elaine was very agitated, in a constant state of hyper-arousal, “alert to every movement in the room, every sound, even the rise of my eyebrow,” Jenkins says. But when it came to talking about her emotions, Elaine shut down.

Here’s why. As a young girl, Elaine was brutally raped. Unbelievably, no one in her family noticed—not even when she came to the dinner table covered from head to toe in bruises.

Without anyone to guide her or help her make sense of what had happened, Elaine tried to rid herself of any residual sensations she felt—she binged and purged, used laxatives, and finally severely restricted her calories in an attempt to numb the pain, be invisible, and “yet at the same time,” Jenkins told me, “get someone to notice.” But no one did.

Elaine felt alone and abandoned by the people she thought would protect her. By the time she checked into the Eating Recovery Center outside of Denver, Colorado, where Jenkins met (and noticed) her, she had a history of unsavory relationships with men, self-destructive behaviors, and no idea how to move forward.

Elaine is a survivor of childhood trauma, and her inability to control her emotions, trust her body, or form meaningful and loving relationships is a common cluster of side effects associated with complex post-traumatic stress disorder (complex PTSD), according to Judith Herman, professor of clinical psychiatry at Harvard and author of Trauma and Recovery, who coined the term. This particularly insidious form of PTSD affects those who suffer from chronic childhood abuse.

While we often think of PTSD as the intense and unexplained symptoms military men and women experience coming home from battle, this anxiety disorder can take many forms and touch a much wider population. Being raped, getting hit by a car, witnessing a violent crime, being in a war zone, losing your best friend to cancer, or even being scared of the possibility of something bad happening can all contribute to PTSD. How you deal with how you feel in the aftermath of such events determines the level of trauma that gets lodged in your cells.
Yoga can make a big difference for trauma survivors like Elaine, and we are beginning to see more research that backs up her experience. A three-year NIH-funded yoga and trauma study conducted at the Trauma Center at Justice Resource Institute in Brookline, Massachusetts, with women who have treatment-resistant complex PTSD, has shown promising results. Bessel van der Kolk, MD, the study's principal investigator, and his colleagues presented preliminary findings at the 2010 International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies conference in Montreal last November. Initial study results revealed that participation in trauma-informed gentle yoga leads to a significant reduction (over 30 percent) in symptoms of post-traumatic stress, including fewer intrusive thoughts and less dissociation from the body. By the end of the study (after only 10 weeks of yoga) several women in the yoga group no longer met diagnostic criteria for PTSD.

Other smaller studies show yoga increases heart rate variability (HRV), a measure of how robust the brain's arousal systems are. It appears that traumatized people have unusually low HRV, says van der Kolk—who is also founder and medical director of the Trauma Center—which could explain why they are “so reactive to minor stresses and so prone to develop a variety of physical illnesses.” Yoga’s ability to touch us on every level of our being—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual—makes it a powerful and effective means for trauma victims to rehabit their bodies safely, calm their minds, experience emotions directly, and begin to feel a sense of strength and control.

All Talked Out

Most experts agree that trauma’s effects live in the body—and that’s why yoga works. Evidence suggests that people like Elaine respond best to body-based therapies, coupled with psychotherapy, because traditional “talk” therapy alone can dredge up old memories and reignite the pain all over again. And, while the mind may spend countless hours reliving the event and retelling the tale, it cannot undo the effects of what happened—the terror, rage, helplessness, and depression that then manifest in the body.

According to van der Kolk, trauma is not the story we tell about the violence we endured or the horrible accident we witnessed; it’s not even the event itself. Instead it’s the stuff we can’t let go of—what van der Kolk calls the “residue of imprints” (and yogis call samskaras) that gets left behind in our neurophysiology (our sensory and hormonal systems). Van der Kolk, the author of numerous articles and studies on how trauma affects the brain, says that traumatized people are “terrified of the sensations in their own bodies,” so it’s imperative that they get some sort of body-based therapy to feel safe again, he says, and learn to care for themselves.
Unresolved “issues in our tissues” manifest physically as migraines, nervous tics, clenched muscles in the neck, shoulders, and jaw, a sunken chest, or a heavy heart. Left unresolved, they can exact an even heavier toll in the form of heart disease, diabetes, panic attacks, ADHD in children, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome, and a host of autoimmune disorders.

On a Physical Plane

Before a trauma survivor like Elaine can let go of any residue or feel any physical sensations, she needs to spend time getting to know her body—a little bit at a time. Dana Moore, a Santa Fe-based psychotherapist and Kripalu Yoga teacher who specializes in trauma therapy, told me adults who were neglected or abused as children “probably had no healthy way of learning about their bodies.” Most of them have neither a strong sense of self nor a keen sense of the connection between the internal and the external. In his sessions, Moore likes to invite students to pendulate between movement and rest, between interoception (sensations in the body) and exteroception (stimuli outside the body). For example, he might guide trauma victims through an exploration of the left hand, noticing every muscle and movement, and then ask them to stop, rest, and feel. And then ask them to bring their attention to their ears, noticing any sounds they hear. An exercise like this reminds them that they can feel something deeply and shift the focus, coming out of discomfort, anytime they want.

Moving from one asana to another, slowly and deliberately, encourages students to stay with sensation and notice what’s happening in their bodies, and to approach each movement with a sense of curiosity. The simplest of poses (standing or sitting in a chair) can produce profound results. Just feeling his feet on the floor for the very first time gave one agitated survivor a sense of balance, stability, and safety. For Elaine, who dissociated from her body and felt numb, doing gentle supported backbends began to wake up her body and get the blood flowing. Building a strong, capable body goes a long way toward developing a strong, centered mind.

No matter what poses survivors choose to do—or how much they experiment with the breathing exercises—they benefit from knowing that each exercise comes to an end, that they won’t get stuck in emotional overwhelm. A pose might feel uncomfortable, a round of pranayama might bring up feelings they would much rather stuff back down, but the sensations are temporary, only around until the next posture or the next exhalation.
Many therapists and experts on yoga for trauma use body scans to help survivors find a degree of safety in their bodies—moving up through the body one muscle or body part at a time. Karen Soltes runs a program at the Washington, DC, VA Medical Center teaching iRest—a more accessible form of yoga nidra, developed by Richard Miller, PhD, director of the Integrative Restoration Institute—to veterans with PTSD. She says body scans can give trauma survivors “safe passage into the body, where hopefully they’ll find some degree of peace and relaxation.” Peter A. Levine, PhD, author of In an Unspoken Voice, calls this going “underneath overwhelming emotions” and tapping into physical sensation. Many survivors report that they are much more able to tolerate intense emotions without being swept away by them when they focus on the underlying sensation in their legs, bellies, chest, or shoulders. As with all yoga practices, survivors are encouraged to stay with the sensation for as long as they choose, and stop when they start to get agitated or frightened.

According to van der Kolk, Western medicine doesn’t give us many tools to “master our own physiology,” so too many times trauma survivors end up self-medicating with drugs and alcohol as well as prescription drugs. Pranayama can have an energizing or calming effect on the nervous system, he says, and quiet the brain. Soltes adds that the breath can keep survivors in the body. Gentle pranayama that emphasizes the exhalation, she says, works well for those who chronically hold their breath or feel agitated. Alternately, focusing on the inhalation can help those collapsed in depression or dissociation, especially when paired with movements like modified sun salutations.

**Your Brain on Trauma**

So how exactly do yoga asanas and pranayama quell agitation or energize a collapsed spirit? Before we talk more specifics, a little neurophysiology lesson is in order. Under normal conditions, the body is hardwired to protect us from danger or stressful situations; trouble ensues when its process is interrupted.

The best way to understand the human response is to look at animals in the wild. Sounds a bit far-fetched, perhaps, but Levine contends that our nervous system has a lot more in common with our four hoofed brethren than we might think. A group of deer grazing in a meadow, for example, may appear happy-go-lucky, but they are continually on the lookout for predators lurking in the forest nearby. The very first thing the deer do when they perceive danger is to stop, stay very still, and listen. This hyper-vigilant stage of arrest activates the sympathetic nervous system (in charge of the fight-or-flight response to danger) and serves two purposes. One, it allows them to figure out what the threat might be and where it’s coming from (a smell in the air or a rustle in the bushes), and two, it helps them be more invisible to a predator.
The moment the deer feel a predator's presence, they take flight, running to safety as fast as they can. If one falters and the coyote catches up to her, her first instinct is to rise up and fight back. If that fails, and she gets caught, she freezes, her muscles stiffening against the assault, and then folds, going limp and numb—helpless to protect herself. The fold or collapse state of hypo-arousal activates the parasympathetic nervous system, shutting down the body's defenses, allowing her to dissociate from the event, and preventing her from feeling too much pain. If she's able to fool her predator and race to safety, she'll tremble, literally shaking off the event, and return to the meadow in time for the next meal. While her brain registers the event and files away a “do not go near those bushes on the right” message, her ordeal is over and done with.

The human nervous system works much the same way. When we perceive danger, the sympathetic nervous system and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis mobilize the body's fight-or-flight resources. Stress hormones pour into the bloodstream so we can react appropriately. They increase our heart rate, divert blood into our large muscle groups (arms and legs), and speed up reaction time. An increase in cortisol releases sugar as fuel into the bloodstream so we can think and move faster. In the meantime, the HPA axis communicates with the rest of the body, instructing the digestive, reproductive, and immune systems to slow down and wait out the danger.

All this activity creates a state of hyper-arousal and fuels the emotions and actions we need to first gain sensory information and then either fight an aggressor (anger) or, if need be, flee the scene to safety (anxiety and fear). Just like our animal friends, humans can also experience complete collapse, or hypo-arousal—when the parasympathetic nervous system activates to help us survive horrific acts of violence. Both the alert and the fold states are designed to be short-lived, functioning to keep us alive and safe from harm.

As we can see, our autonomic nervous system was designed to be on the lookout for danger and keep us safe. Problems arise when the pain and traumatic residue, or samskara, remains in the body long after the event is over and the brain cannot discriminate between what is in the past and what is a real, present threat. The body's posture (rigid or collapsed) continues to signal danger, so the nervous system goes in search of the perpetrator, assigning blame wherever it can. Levine says, “If frightening sensations are not given the time and attention they need to move through the body and resolve or dissolve, the individual will continue to be gripped by fear.”

According to David Emerson, co-author of Overcoming Trauma through Yoga and director of the Trauma Center's yoga program, people who have experienced chronic or repeated trauma “find themselves alternating between being highly sensitized and easily triggered, and feeling numb or disconnected from themselves and other people.”
Calm the Waters

In addition to the recently concluded NIH study, other studies and plenty of anecdotal evidence support the claim that yoga mitigates the fight-or-flight response through a combination of active asanas, pranayama (with particular emphasis on the exhalation), and deep relaxation. It does this by decreasing the sympathetic nervous system’s reactive response and increasing the parasympathetic relaxation response. Jay P., an Air Force vet from the Boston area, who experienced a brutal assault when he was stationed overseas in the early ‘80s—too horrible for him even to describe—shares a story that perfectly demonstrates yoga’s calming effect.

One manifestation of Jay’s trauma is acute anxiety, which gets triggered when he’s in a crowd of people. After a particularly difficult therapy session, he says, “I was feeling a lot worse than when I came in.” He got to the metro station in Boston, right in the middle of rush hour. His anxiety built as the crowd grew bigger; at one point, he says, “I felt like, ‘I don’t think I can do this.’” Feeling quite agitated, he turned around to leave, and then he saw a woman standing nearby holding a little child. “I put my hand on my belly and started to breathe—really focusing and paying attention to my breathing as I looked at the little kid and her mom.” Suddenly the crowd and Jay’s anxiety seemed to dissipate—everything felt more manageable. “I had put myself into a shavasana-type pose with a sweet little kid in front of me,” he says, and it worked.

Re-energize the Body

Less well known is yoga’s ability to put the brakes on an overly active parasympathetic nervous system (PNS). Recognized for its role in the relaxation response, the PNS can also get stuck on unhealthy overdrive. As our animal friends demonstrated, the freeze-and-fold response involves shutting down the body’s responses and lowering blood pressure and heart rate, all of which allows a victim to dissociate from the traumatic event, and prevents him from feeling too much pain.

Unfortunately for trauma survivors, long after the event has passed, they may still feel numb and depressed, constantly tired, and completely dissociated from their feelings. Levine says chronic immobility paralyzes a trauma victim, and fear of unleashing her feelings deepens her sense of paralysis. It’s important, he says, for survivors to learn to disentangle the fear and helplessness from their immobility. Elizabeth Hopper, PhD, coauthor of Overcoming Trauma through Yoga, tells the story of Seleni to illustrate how yoga can help.
Seleni (again a pseudonym), who grew up in an African country that has experienced a great deal of violence, was trafficked into domestic servitude in the United States. Scooped up into the arms of Project Reach, a program that serves survivors of human trafficking, Seleni learned that she would be required to repeatedly tell (and hence relive) her story—to prosecutors, lawyers, judges, and therapists—in hopes of identifying and eventually prosecuting her abusers. Hopper, program director of Project Reach, says she sat with Seleni, watching and listening as she recounted the horrific details of her plight. At one point, Hopper noticed that Seleni’s body began to sag forward, growing heavier and weaker until it gave way, and her head and upper body collapsed on the desk in front of her. She told Hopper that she shuts down this way when she has to talk about her ordeal; and when that happens, she knows she won’t be able sleep that night.

Instead of continuing with the story, Hopper asked Seleni to stand up. They breathed together—emphasizing the inhalation—gently energizing Seleni’s body and activating her sympathetic nervous system. In a slow, rhythmic way, Hopper led Seleni through a dynamic mountain pose, encouraging her to move between a posture in which she collapses (shoulders hunched forward, neck and head bowed) and one in which she lifts her chest, elongates her spine, and raises her head up. Seleni’s inhalation deepened and she began to coordinate arm movements with the rise and fall of her breath. When she returned to her chair, Seleni sat up straighter and her face brightened. She even shared a few spiritual songs from her tradition that always made her feel better.

**Engage the Mind**

Meditation can also help trauma victims to bring their nervous system back into balance. But sitting in silent meditation, with just their thoughts to keep them company, can be terrifying, according to van der Kolk. He says trauma-sensitive people “have their sense of time thrown off and think something will last forever.” So he suggests those with PTSD get more comfortable with postures and breath work and learn relaxation techniques before moving on to meditation. Mantra meditation and yoga nidra provide two alternatives to following one’s thoughts in silence. Using a mantra (see “Healing Meditation Practice” on page 52) gives the mind an anchor, a companion on the journey inward, something to return to as memories and sensations surface and dissolve. Yoga nidra or Richard Miller’s iRest practice helps them stay present to what’s going on—feeling the energy of the body, and exploring sensations without judgment or attachment.
While no one I spoke with believes yoga alone has the power to heal the pain trauma survivors endure, every single survivor, teacher, and expert wholeheartedly believes yoga provides a powerful ally on the journey home, and allows survivors—many for the very first time—to create a loving and nurturing relationship with their bodies. We can't predict or control what the future holds, nor can we change what the past has dealt, but we can learn to care deeply about ourselves and to embrace the present.

As the former editor-in-chief of Yoga International magazine, Linda Sparrowe has been instrumental in bringing the authentic voice of yoga to thousands of yoga teachers and practitioners who are ready to take their practice to the next level.
The Law of “Dharma” or Purpose in Life

Dharma is a Sanskrit word that means “purpose in life.” The Law of Dharma says that we have taken manifestation in physical form to fulfill a purpose. The field of pure potentiality is divinity in its essence, and the divine takes human form to fulfill a purpose.

According to this law, you have a unique talent and a unique way of expressing it. There is something that you can do better than anyone else in the whole world - and for every unique talent and unique expression of that talent, there are also unique needs. When these needs are matched with creative expression of that talent that is the spark that creates affluence.

Expressing your talents to fulfill needs create unlimited wealth and abundance. If you could start children right from the beginning with this thought, you’d see the effect it has on their lives.

The 30-minute Meditation for Stimulating Your Dharma Start by sitting comfortably. It is important you sit and not lie down, because in a supine position you are more likely to fall asleep. Close your eyes, look in and down at your heart. Clear your mind of any thoughts by focusing on your breathing.

Breath in, breathe out. If your mind begins to wander, go back to your breath. You can breathe in and count 1, 2, 3, 4, and then breathe out and count 1, 2, 3, 4. If you notice a thought coming in, observe it, and then go back to your breath. See how far you can count before thoughts arise.

Read the Following:

Today I will lovingly nurture the god or goddess in embryo that lies deep within my soul. I will pay attention to the spirit within me that animates both my body and my mind. I will awaken myself to this deep stillness within my heart. I will carry the consciousness of timeless, eternal Being in the midst of time-bound experience.

I will make a list of my unique talents. Then I will list all the things that I love to do while expressing my unique talents. When I express my unique talents, and use them in the service of humanity, I lose track of time and create abundance in my life as well as in the lives of others.
I will ask myself daily, “How can I serve?” and “How can I help?” The answers to these questions will allow me to help and serve my fellow human beings with love.

Now, silently, repeat after me and ask yourself these questions:

• Why am I here?
• What do I want?
• What is my Dharma / Purpose?
• What am I grateful for?
• How can I serve / give?

Repeat aloud, whisper, and then silently, repeat the following mantra, remembering to return to your breath when thoughts begin to arise: Om Varunam (Va-roo-nam) Namah, which means, “My life is in harmony with cosmic law.

“Discover your higher self. Express your unique talents.

**After 30 Minutes Have Passed (since starting), read the Following:** Slowly bring your awareness back. Cover your eyes with your palms and open your fingers to let the light in slowly.

*Source: The 7 Spiritual Laws of Success by Deepak Chopra*
A. Getting Started

The “Business” Side of the Business
If teaching YogaKids is going to be your focus, we recommend you engage a qualified CPA or bookkeeper to help establish the financial template of your business. They can often help with local business requirements and you can avoid hiring an attorney. This will cover most of your business needs. Also, a website that has checklists for the pertinent things to keep in mind as you start your business is http://www.sba.gov/. They have free resources in many communities and mentors that will meet with you at no cost to help you navigate the “business” side of getting started.

Create a Name
Choose a name for your new teaching business. Choose one that correlates well with the size and approach that best represents your vision. Mind-mapping is perfect for this. (Remember that your business name must be different than simply “YogaKids of Anywhere, USA”.) Use the internet search tools at www.GoDaddy.com or www.NetworkSolutions.com to check if the URL associated with your choice is available and purchase it if it is. (The availability of your choice is an important factor in your decision. Buying the dotcom of your business name is essential.)

Build your credibility by using the YogaKids branding power. As a licensed teacher, you are an active part of the YogaKids community and have access to all the benefits that come with such a designation. As an active CYKT, you can use the CYKT logo on your own website and promotional material. You can use the marketing flyers provided by YogaKids and advertise your classes as YogaKids classes.

B. CYKT Start-Up Tips

Offer free 10-20-minute introductory classes at local libraries or community centers. Use the time to introduce yourself and YogaKids, as well as establish the benefits of attending classes and workshops. Integrate yourself and YogaKids into an existing children’s environment. Reach out to teachers, schools, youth organizations, daycare centers, park programs, churches, and health clubs.
Offer YogaKids classes in your community in unique ways: for instance, as a birthday party theme or a school-sponsored club. Introduce YogaKids to large community organizations and businesses, such as museums, hotels, resorts and charities. Offer it as an on-site daycare option for businesses.

**C. Determine your pricing, fees and policies.**

Determine what your time is worth. Only you can do that. Set your goals and take it step by step. Remember that every community is unique, and that one demographic area may be dramatically different from another. Some factors to consider are socio-economic conditions, number of participants, length of class, content of class, and who is paying the bill. (We see classes ranging in price from $5 to $25+ per student. An average benchmark can be between $8 and $18 per student with a class size ranging from 6-10 students for a 45-minute class.)

Do your homework! Research the following offerings in your community for prices and content: yoga studios, existing yoga-for-children classes (if any), other specialized children's classes (such as gymnastics, dance and martial arts), and personal trainer/private yoga sessions.

Clearly communicate your business policies to clients from the beginning. You need to decide what best works for your business. Some items to consider include: your policy for refunds, credits, and time limits. And because you’re working with children, you’ll have a few special considerations: Are parents allowed in the class? Are there penalties for late pick-ups? Should all the participants be potty-trained?

**D. Determine Your Services and Your Target Audience**

What age groups will you serve with your classes? Will you be teaching children with special needs? What modifications will you need to make to your curriculum to be inclusive of students with different abilities? What types of classes will you offer?

You can offer specialty classes celebrating individual events (birthdays) or classes celebrating universal events (holidays). You can offer themed classes, such as one for athletes. There is no limit to what types of classes you can create! Be sure to utilize the Lesson Plan Library in the YogaKids University.
Will you offer package deals for classes? What will these be? Will you be selling other products, such as books, mats or videos? Where will you be teaching the classes? Do you have access to a venue, or will you partner with a studio? If partnering with a studio, what kind of deal will you need to make to be beneficial to both parties?

E. More Marketing Ideas

• Master an elevator speech you can give people when someone asks, “What do you do?” For instance, your speech could be “I help parents and children ages 3-10 reduce stress and improve learning through yoga.” Your speech should be short, simple and direct. Practice it until it's perfect and sounds natural!

• Inquire from the people you meet about their own needs. Find out what they're looking for and if there’s a way for you to meet their needs.

• Drop your business card in community “hot spots” for children and families. These may include pediatricians' offices, daycare centers, hospitals and therapy practices. You can order Certified YogaKids Teacher business cards from YogaKids.

• Utilize social media! Share all your promotional materials on all the various platforms. Give away free tips and invite people to sign up for your mailing list.

• Cross-promote! For instance, promote other community events on your own website and social media pages. Share your support and ask others to support your own efforts!

• Start a blog on your website that highlights the many benefits of yoga for children. Send your favorite blog entries to chatwithus@yogakids.com for submission on the YogaKids website blog. We will connect with you should we decide to run it.

• Get testimonials from your students and parents. Share those on your website and social media pages. Again, submit them to us (at the above email address) and we may share them on our website and newsletter. We LOVE to brag about our teachers and celebrate their accomplishments!
• Always be on the lookout for new marketing opportunities. Is there a local festival or community event in which you can participate?

• Remember that the “personal touch” makes a difference! Make the effort with phone calls and notes (either about your pupil’s progress or about special offerings you want to share with your client).

• Network! If you want folks to help you, take the time to help them. Pass on THEIR business card when the time is right. Help others to succeed and you’ll find that same success come your way.

F. Know Your Financial Goals and Meet Them

Write down your financial goal. Then work backwards. How many classes -- and at what price -- do you need to reach your goal? How many workshops will you need to present? Will private classes or special events offer additional income opportunities? Should you offer first-time consultations and/or free introductory classes? Will you offer discounts? How will all these factors affect the bottom line? Read your goals daily to stay on track!

G. Stay Organized

Deciding on a system for organizing the different aspects of your business is essential and will save you time in the long run. Important things to consider: Will you be investing in a computer system and/or software for organizing your business information? How will you track your students’ participation and information? How and where will you store waivers and insurance information?

H. Utilize the YogaKids University Resources

We have many webinars dedicated to marketing and business practices featuring sage advice from successful Certified YogaKids Teachers.