STRETCH Your Storytime!
Supporting Early Learning with Yoga and Movement
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Today’s Goals:
Basic introduction to why to use yoga in storytime
Basic introduction to how yoga supports early learning
Experience a few yoga shapes in your own body
Hear instruction differences between adults and preschool kids
General approach to yoga storytime design

Feel In Your Body!
Seated Upward Salute
Feet rest on floor, toes facing forward.
Inhale and inhale sits us up around the ears. Enjoy a few breaths here. Check that your shoulders are relaxed, away from your ears. On another inhale, tilt your head up to look between the hands.
Think of lifting your chest up the sky rather than bending backward!
This is spinal extension!
Standing Pose
Extended Mountain or Upward Salute
Urdhva Hastasana

To teach to kids:
Let’s stand tall like mountains. Feel how strong your body is! What do you notice that you feel standing here? Can you feel your breath? When your body is ready to breathe in, stretch your arms up toward the sky. How does that shape feel?

Names: mountain, victory, stick, seaweed, palm tree, skyscraper

What is Yoga?
“Yoga is a union of the body, heart, and mind; yoga is what we experience when these seemingly disparate parts of the self are brought together.”

Stories, Songs, and Stillness: Creating Playful Storytimes with Yoga and Movement (pg 1)

Yoga Is…
- a contemplative movement practice
- physical activity
- at least 2,000 years old

Yoga Is Not…
- a religion
- limited to those of a certain shape, size, fitness, or age
- a passing fad or trend
Yoga Benefits to Children

• Improved self-regulation
• Reduced stress response
• Improved attention and social skills
• Improved endurance, strength, motor planning, motor performance, static balance, bilateral coordination, and flexibility

Key Concepts

Emphasis on play (over perfection)
• No “fixing” postures
• Children can participate at their own comfort level
• Modify poses to work within child’s body (including balance considerations)
• Lots of imagination (books, stories, songs, and games)
• Encourage adults to practice along in a child-friendly way

Feel In Your Body!

Seated Forward Bend

Feet on floor, toes facing forward. Inhale and stretch arms alongside the ears. Exhale and tip forward from the hips. Check to be sure you aren’t rounding your upper spine! Keep arms extended, or allow them to drop onto desk in front of you.

This is spinal flexion!
To teach to kids:
Let’s all find our way to a seat. Stretch your legs out in front of you. Close them together and let them be still. Point your toes up to the sky. Now wid your arms alongside your ears. Let’s feel our bodies breathe in, and when it’s time to breathe out, let’s tip forward just a little. What does it feel like to fold your body forward in this shape?
Names: arrow, fold, sandwich, sprout.

Yoga and Early Learning
Physical Literacy, Early Literacy, and Social-Emotional Learning

Stories, Songs, and Stretches!
Uses yoga-inspired movement and embodied play intentionally to support young children’s physical literacy, early literacy, and social-emotional development.
Physical Literacy – Body

“...the ability to move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person.”

- SHAPE America

S1.E1: Locomotor and Stability

Performs locomotor skills (hopping, galloping, running, sliding, skipping) while maintaining balance (S1.E1.K).

Performs jumping and landing actions with balance (S1.E3.K).

Maintains momentary stillness on different bases of support (S1.E7.K).

Forms wide, narrow, curled, and twisted body shapes (S1.E7.Kb).
Feel In Your Body
Seated Side Stretch
Feet on floor, face flat forward. Inhale and stretch your left arm up alongside the ear. Right arm can rest in lap or on chair. Feel your left arm and spine move to the right. As you exhale, feel the expansion of the left side body. Enjoy a few breaths, and repeat on the right side.
This is lateral flexion of the spine!

Social-Emotional Learning
CASEL Competencies
• Self-awareness
• Self-management
• Social awareness
• Relationship skills
• Responsible decision making
Self-awareness

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."

- Identifying emotions
- Accurate self-perception
- Recognizing strengths
- Self-confidence
- Self-efficacy

Self-Awareness

Building Self-Awareness through Mind-Body Connection

How do I feel?
- How does my body feel today?
- How does this shape feel in my body?
- How does this emotion feel in my body?

What do I like?
- What movements do I enjoy?
- Do different movements feel more enjoyable when I'm experiencing different feelings?

Self-Awareness and Relationship Skills

- Book selection
- Building emotional vocabulary
- Dialogic reading
- Empathy
Feel In Your Body

Seated Spiral Twist

Feel on the first breath facing forward. On an inhale, feet plant firmly on the floor. As you exhale, keep your hips planted on the seat and allow your spine to twist to the right. Hands can rest on the right hip or reach to the left knee. Enjoy some breaths here and repeat on the other side.

Early Literacy - Mind

What children know about language, books and reading before learning to read.

- Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR)

Every CHILD Ready to READ

Talking, Singing, Reading, Writing, Playing.
2015 Study on PreK Early Literacy and Movement

- 400+ preK children received either:
  - Early literacy instruction (Let's Decode)
  - Movement intervention (Moving On with Literacy)
  - Both

- Children who received both types of instruction performed better than controls on literacy assessments


Talk

- What does “salutation” mean?
- What are other words that you can use to greet people?
- What words do you say when you are leaving?
- Do you know how to say “hello” or “goodbye” in any languages other than English?

Sing

- “Dance for the Sun” from Dance for the Sun by Kira Willey
- “Sun Dance” by Bari Koral
- “Sun Dance” from Musical Yoga Adventures by Linda W. Lipp
Read
Say Hello by Rachel Isadora

Happy Spines
Movement Sequence
Did you know our spines can move six ways? We can fold them forward, bend them back, stretch them from side to side, and twist them! Move your spine all six ways every day to help keep your body happy and healthy!

Breathing Break
Questions?

Yoga-inspired movement and embodied play support young children’s early learning in BODY, HEART, AND MIND when we intentionally choose books and movements that encourage the development of physical literacy, social-emotional learning, and early literacy skills.
Stories, Songs, and Stretches!
Program Design

Program Template
30-45 minutes
Ages 3-6 and adult caregiver(s)

Opening Song
Warm Up Movement
Book with Movement
Song with Movement
Breathing Break
Book, Story, or Game
Mindful Moment
Listening Story
Rest

Rest
Most important pose – don’t skip it!
30 seconds to 2 minutes for this age
There will be fidgets and sounds, that’s fine!
Any shape that is comfortable
Include yourself in the wall
Personal Considerations

• This is a physical program – be mindful of your own abilities and limitations.
• Practice and feel comfortable with all movements and shapes you are using in advance.
• Demonstrate all shapes in an age-appropriate manner.
• Take a mindful minute to set your own intention before every session.
• Go with the flow; there is no “perfect.”

More From Katie Scherrer
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• Stories, Songs, and Stretches! Certification:
  Public workshops at yoga studios / Private group workshops for schools, libraries, etc. / Online workshops launching spring 2019.
• Newsletter.
• Yoga Storytime presentation with Jenn Carson at ALA Annual, Sunday 6/24, 9 AM.
• Mindfulness in Libraries: 4 week online course, September 2018.
• Movin’ and Groovin’ in the Library presentation with Noah Lenstra and Barbara Scott, ALSC Institute, September 2018.
• Frequent training on library outreach to Latino immigrant communities and bilingual storytime development.