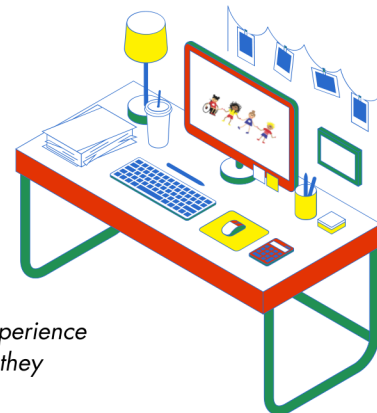


## FROM THE DESK OF DR. JOHNSON, R. PSYCH.

*I frequently recommend to the families I work with that their child participates in yoga. My primary objectives for this recommendation are twofold: first, to help their child establish a stronger connection between their emotions and their body's signals (the mind/body connection); and second, to assist them in developing deep breathing as an effective calming technique. I've observed that many of the children I work with struggle to recognize or interpret their body's signals, leading to emotional overwhelm without effective coping strategies.*

*I suggest that children start with 6 to 10 sessions to address these areas and continue if they find the experience engaging. My hope is that the benefits of yoga will serve as a stabilizing force for these children when they encounter life's challenges.*

***If I had the authority in the field of education, I would integrate yoga as a fundamental component in every Physical Education curriculum, with the aspiration of seeing this valuable tool for mental well-being become a regular practice in classrooms. Hence this article...***



### Nurturing Kids' Mental Well-being through Yoga

Parents often seek avenues to facilitate our children's growth and well-being. Amidst the plethora of options, one that often goes unnoticed is yoga. While primarily associated with adult practices, yoga holds an array of benefits for children and adolescents. Beyond its physical aspects, yoga serves as a transformative practice that nurtures not only the body but also the mind.

#### **Understanding Yoga's Impact**

Yoga goes beyond just physical activity. It's a comprehensive practice that involves things like controlling breath and doing specific body postures called asanas. This varied approach ensures children don't only do a workout, but also take part in a balanced body-mind activity that sets the groundwork for important life skills.

The key to yoga's effectiveness in improving children's mental well-being lies in its all-encompassing method. Unlike regular exercises that target physical fitness, yoga involves a practice where the mind and body are nurtured together. This comprehensive approach results in many well-studied and backed benefits:

**Forging Mind-Body Harmony:** Yoga acts as a bridge for children to connect their thoughts and bodily sensations. This process sharpens their self-awareness, allowing them to decipher their bodies' intricate language. As a result, they gain autonomy and a foundation in self-care.

**Mastering Emotion Regulation:** By weaving mindfulness techniques and breath awareness, yoga equips children with a valuable toolkit for managing emotions effectively. The outcome is tangible, with reduced stress levels, enhanced emotional control, and heightened consciousness in the present moment.

**Alleviating Anxiety and Stress:** The combination of deep breathing exercises and gentle movements in yoga creates a conducive atmosphere for relaxation. This newfound relaxation equips children with a practical means to navigate life's pressures. Consequently, they acquire skills to respond to stressors in a calm and intentional manner.

**Embodiment of Mindfulness:** Amidst screens, distractions, and information overload, yoga offers a refuge. Through focused practice, children learn to detach from noise and embrace the present. This enhances attention spans, reduces negativity, and heightens mindfulness.

**Cultivating Confidence:** Yoga, with its non-competitive philosophy, becomes a platform for individual growth. This uniqueness lets children track progress without external comparisons. Tangible improvements translate into boosted self-esteem and nurtured positive body image.

**Boosting Thinking Skills:** In an era of increased screen time, cultivating focus and memory can be challenging. This is where yoga becomes beneficial, enhancing thinking abilities. Different yoga postures require concentration, leading to improved concentration and building muscle memory. These skills, developed during yoga practice, naturally extend to academic activities, enhancing overall performance.

**Improving Sleep Quality:** In a stress-laden era, children are not immune to its effects. Unchecked stress disrupts sleep. Yoga intervenes, arming children with tools to self-soothe, process emotions, and ease into calm before sleep. Incorporating yoga routines spreads a sense of calm within and around them.

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**Effective Coping Strategies:** Today's world bombards children with information, demands, and influences. Maneuvering through this complexity requires a toolkit of ways to cope. Yoga strengthens bodies, minds, and spirits. Research indicates that young yoga practitioners form strong connections with themselves and the world. This helps them manage emotions, reduce stress, and stay grounded. Additionally, yoga offers a positive way to express emotions, steering away from harmful coping strategies.

**Laying Lifelong Foundations:** The wisdom of introducing yoga early in life is paramount. Skills cultivated during formative years lay the groundwork for enduring mental well-being. These skills become an integral part of their toolkit, equipping them to tackle life's challenges as they progress from childhood to adulthood.

It is important to emphasize that practicing yoga should always be done with the guidance of experts. Just like any other physical activity, there's a possibility of getting hurt. Therefore, it's vital for children to start their yoga journey with qualified instructors.

*As yoga becomes a part of a child's routine, they acquire a variety of skills. These skills develop into increased self-awareness and confidence in handling emotional and physical reactions to life's challenges.*

### Edmonton and Area Kids' Yoga - thank-you to these providers for providing their information

• **Atma Yoga Canada** 14915 107 Ave., Edmonton <https://atmayogacanada.com/> 825-785-2862  
**Baby Yogi and Me** Mondays from 9:30 am - 10:30 am Parent/baby  
 Baby Yogi and Me is a class designed for both a parent and baby. This class begins with an energizing yoga flow for mom/dad to ease back to movement; then we transition to a baby yoga flow which includes yoga postures and infant development movement guided through songs and rhymes. This class gives a space and time for parents and babies to bond as they move mindfully and to connect with other parents and babies.

**Toddler Yoga** Wednesdays from 10:00 am - 10:45 am 2 to 4 years old  
 Toddler Yoga introduces yoga and mindfulness to children between 2 and 4 years old. This class is designed around a theme that inspires the fun, age-appropriate yoga postures, breathing techniques and mindfulness activities. This dynamic class combines yoga and mindfulness with engaging stories, songs and props. Parent participation is encouraged.

• **Glow Yoga Kids** Facebook GlowYogaKids IG glowyogakids [info@glowyogakids.com](mailto:info@glowyogakids.com) 587-712-9900  
 At Glow Yoga Kids, we encourage the young and young at heart to let their inner light shine with our creative style of yoga and movement. Our yoga and movement classes are unique and engaging by using a range of sensory experiences, including songs, dancing, art, storytelling, uplifting music, creative movement, age appropriate games, visualization, affirmations, and of course yoga poses. We provide all necessary equipment and themes for an enriching experience, whether introducing yoga or enhancing existing practice. Our goal is to inspire body, mind, and spirit growth, promoting trust, connection, and value for every child we work with.

We Bring The Yoga to You, Programs Offered : Yoga in my School, Daycare Classes, Community Classes, Birthday Parties, Yoga Camps, Club and Group Yoga, Private Classes, Yoga in the Park and Yoga for Everyone.

• **Prana Yoga Studio** 5611 199 St NW, Edmonton [yoga@pranayogastudio.ca](mailto:yoga@pranayogastudio.ca) 780-761-2226  
**KIDS YOGA** Tuesdays 6 - 7 pm and Thursdays 4:30 - 5:30 pm 5 to 9 years old  
**TWEEN YOGA** Mondays 4:30 - 5:30 pm 11 to 14 years old  
 These classes combine traditional hatha yoga postures and pranayama (breath control) with educational themes to engage the "Whole Child" through learning. Your child's class will include yoga, games, meditation and relaxation.