

## Yoga Breaks for Preschool & Elementary School Age Children

*You know your students better than anyone. What do they need today? Are they restless or lethargic? Tuned in or tuned out? What time of day is it - first thing in the morning or just before an important test? Listed below are five different categories of yoga tools with brief overviews to help you meet your students' needs. Choose an activity (called a practice) from any of the categories. Depending on your needs and space, you can link several back to back. If you have a full hour and plenty of space, you could easily sample from each category. But for practical reasons of time and space, these are Yoga Breaks, because sometimes we just need a good stretch or self calming activity to ground us and prepare us for whatever comes next. And maybe we only have 5 minutes. Consider these self empowering tools part of the foundation you are helping your students build for a more happy and healthy life. For detailed descriptions on introducing these tools to your classroom, click the blue link for the category or press the Toolbox button in the Engage section of the King's Land Tales website.*

### 1.) [Breath Awareness Practices](#) and Connecting to the Breath (Pranayama)

“When we stop and pay attention to our breath, then sometimes we can make...a choice that is kind to us and kind to others.” Amy Saltzman, [A Still Quiet Place](#)

Breathing is a tool that most children can learn to use for self-regulation. Breathing practices increase focus. Breath awareness practices are engaging and easy for children to feel and understand. They can practice anytime and anywhere. The benefits are many. Children gain confidence by learning how to manage their moods. Through breathing practices children can calm themselves when upset, energize themselves when feeling low, learn to love and honor their body by tuning into its functions, and create space in the body for natural breathing.

Flower Hands Breath  
Elevator Breath  
Balloon Breath  
Reach for the Sun  
Belly Breathing  
Count the Breath

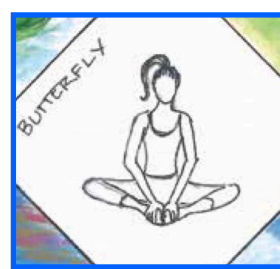
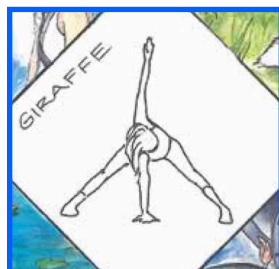
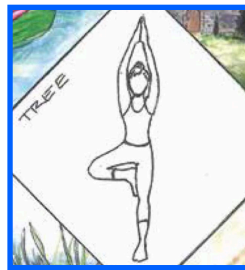
### 2.) [Yoga Poses](#) (Asanas)

There are different yoga poses for balancing, calming, or energizing effects on the body. Learn a few poses and teach them to your children. They will love it! There are lots of sources on the internet (including YouTube) demonstrating different poses for children. You can find them here as well under the Engage button. Yoga poses for children are similar to ones for adults except they have fun names, aren't generally held as long, and form is not stressed as much. In other words, their poses do not have to be done perfectly. And neither do yours!

Some easier poses to pique your interest and theirs:

- Tree pose which leads to Forest pose (fun group pose)
- Cat - Can you meow?
- Cow - Can you moo?

- Bamboo (Forward Folds are calming)
- Snake (Cobra) Hisssssssss
- Child's Pose (Rock, also called Mouse) - a resting pose
- Lotus (crisscross applesauce works fine)
- Lion pose - lots of fun for children
- Warrior I - "We are strong" affirmation
- Giraffe - top hand can "munch" leaves



### 3.) [Guided Visualization](#) (Also a form of Meditation)

Guided visualization relaxes the physical body, and allows children to become more in tune with their bodies, and quiet their minds. This lowers stress, refreshes the body and helps them find peacefulness in creative ways, using their imagination.

Squeeze-Release Relax the Body  
 Magic Carpet Ride with brief body scan

### 4.) [Mindfulness/Meditation Practices](#)

Mindfulness meditation is a mental training practice that teaches us to slow down racing thoughts, let go of negativity, and calm both our mind and body. It is an effective way for children to learn to deal with stress long before it becomes a challenge. It helps us feel gratitude and interconnectedness with each other and the world. It also helps us realize we have choices about whether or not to act on our own impulses. This is a very powerful tool for children.

Sa Ta Na Ma (Truth is my name) Meditation  
 Loving Kindness Meditation  
 Walking Meditation  
 Noticing Walk  
 Listening Bell Meditation  
 Mindful Eating Practice

## 5.) [Mudras](#) (Hand Gestures)

Mudras are hand gestures that help calm and center the mind. Mudra is a Sanskrit word meaning to produce joy.

Prayer Mudra  
Diamond Mudra  
Flower Mudra  
Turtle in the Shell Mudra  
Whole World Mudra  
Grounding Mudra