

**YOGA FOR YOUNG MINDS: NURTURING HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN CHILDREN****Kanika Budhlakoti\*<sup>1</sup> and Tejendra Singh<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup>PG Scholar in Department of Kaumarbhritya, UAU, Gurukul Campus Haridwar.<sup>2</sup>PG Scholar in Department of Swasthavritta, UAU, Uttaranchal Ayurvedic College Dehradun.**\*Corresponding Author: Kanika Budhlakoti**

PG Scholar in Department of Kaumarbhritya, UAU, Gurukul Campus Haridwar.

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**ABSTRACT**

In the fast-paced modern world, children face numerous challenges that impact their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. As society becomes increasingly reliant on technology and sedentary lifestyles, it is crucial to introduce children to holistic practices that promote their overall health and development. This article highlights the significance of incorporating Yoga into children's lives to foster a balanced and thriving state of being. The physical health benefits of Yoga are multifaceted, as it enhances flexibility, strength, and balance. Regular practice of Yoga in children supports healthy musculoskeletal development, improves posture, and boosts the immune system. Furthermore, Yoga's mindful breathing techniques and meditation practices instill emotional stability and resilience, enabling children to manage stress and anxiety effectively. Yoga has a positive impact on children's cognitive abilities, enhancing concentration, memory retention, and problem-solving skills. By encouraging self-awareness and introspection, Yoga empowers children to develop emotional intelligence and empathy, nurturing positive social interactions and self-esteem. In present era, dependency over inventions increases day by day which decreases the physical workload from everyone's shoulder leading to various metabolic disorders such as Obesity, Diabetes etc. Yoga act as preventive measures with lifestyle modifications. Yoga provides training of mind and body to bring emotional balance. Children need such tools to listen inward to their bodies, feelings, and ideas. Yoga may assist them in developing in sound ways, to strengthen themselves, and be contributing social beings. One reason why children experience stress and mental health challenges is that globalization exposes the youth all over the world to various new demands, standards, and options. There is also increased pressure to succeed in school, partly due to increased competition but also a diverse range of options available for children in contemporary times than in the past. The dominant presence of multimedia devices and the time spent on them by children are clear indicators of the shift in lifestyles and priorities of our new generation. Yoga help children cope with stress and thus, contribute positively to balance in life, well-being, and mental health. We present research literature suggesting that yoga improves children's physical and mental well-being. Similarly, Yoga in schools helps students improve resilience, mood, and self-regulation skills pertaining to emotions and stress.

**KEYWORDS:** Yoga, Children, Breathing techniques and Meditation, Well-being, Mental health.**INTRODUCTION**

In today's fast-paced and technology-driven world, children often face various physical and mental health challenges. It is becoming increasingly vital to introduce them to holistic practices that promote their overall well-being. Among these practices, Yoga has gained significant recognition for their numerous benefits. This article explores the importance of Yoga in children, highlighting their positive impact on physical health, mental well-being, and overall development.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Physical Health Benefits:** Regular practice of Yoga provides children with immense physical benefits. Yoga asanas (poses) enhance flexibility, strength, and balance. These postures promote the healthy development of muscles and bones, improving overall body posture and

reducing the risk of musculoskeletal issues. Additionally, yoga increases blood circulation and oxygenation, supporting the functioning of various organs and boosting the immune system. By engaging in Yoga from an early age, children develop healthy habits and an appreciation for an active lifestyle that can benefit them throughout their lives.<sup>[2]</sup>

**Mental Well-being:** Yoga significantly contribute to children's mental well-being, fostering emotional stability and resilience. The practice of Yoga incorporates mindful breathing techniques, meditation, and relaxation exercises that help children manage stress and anxiety. Yoga encourages self-awareness and introspection, allowing children to connect with their thoughts, emotions, and bodies. By promoting a calm

and focused state of mind, yoga equips children with coping mechanisms to deal with everyday challenges and develop a positive attitude towards life.<sup>[3]</sup>

**Enhanced Concentration and Academic Performance:** Yoga can have a profound impact on children's cognitive abilities, leading to improved concentration and academic performance. Yoga helps children developmental clarity, memory retention, and enhanced cognitive function. Regular practice of yoga has been shown to increase attention span and improve the ability to concentrate for longer durations. As a result, children who engage in yoga often exhibit better academic performance, creativity and problem-solving skills.

**Emotional Intelligence and Self-esteem:** Yoga facilitate the development of emotional intelligence in children. Through mindfulness practices and self-reflection, children learn to identify and regulate their emotions effectively. This awareness leads to improved emotional resilience, empathy and understanding of others. Furthermore, Yoga fosters a sense of self-acceptance and self-esteem in children, enabling them to build a positive self-image and navigate social interactions with confidence<sup>[4]</sup>.

**Holistic Development:** One of the greatest advantages of introducing Yoga to children is their holistic development. These practices nurture physical, mental and emotional well-being simultaneously, leading to balanced growth. By engaging in Yoga, children cultivate discipline, patience, and perseverance. They learn to respect their bodies, listen to their inner voice and embrace a healthy lifestyle.

#### **Limitation of screen time<sup>[6]</sup>**

Yoga can be a wonderful tool to limit screen time in children by engaging them in physical activity and promoting mindfulness. Here are a few yoga asanas (poses) that can help children reduce their screen time and cultivate a healthier relationship with technology:

**Mountain Pose (Tadasana):** This simple standing pose helps children ground themselves and become aware of their body and breath. It can be practiced anytime, anywhere, and serves as a reminder to take breaks from screens and reconnect with the present moment.

**Tree Pose (Vrikshasana):** Tree Pose is a balancing pose that requires focus and concentration. By practicing this pose, children can develop their ability to concentrate and find stability in their bodies and minds.

**Downward Facing Dog Pose(Adho-Mukha Svanasana):** Downward Facing Dog is a rejuvenating pose that stretches the entire body. It helps release tension in the neck, shoulders, and back, which can be common areas of discomfort due to prolonged screen time.

**Butterfly Pose (Baddha Konasana):** Butterfly Pose is a seated posture that opens the hips and stretches the inner thighs. It can be a great pose to practice while taking breaks from sitting and staring at screens.

**Seated Forward Bend Pose(Paschimottanasana):** Seated Forward Bend is a calming pose that stretches the back of the body and promotes relaxation. Children can practice this pose to counteract the effects of sitting for extended periods and to release any tension or stiffness in the back and hamstrings.

**Child's Pose (Balasana):** Child's Pose is a restorative pose that helps children relax and release stress. It can be a comforting pose to practice after spending time on screens, allowing children to find a moment of calm and center themselves.

Encouraging children to practice these Yoga asanas regularly can help them develop a healthier balance between screen time and physical activity. Additionally, incorporating mindfulness techniques and breathing exercises during Yoga sessions can enhance their ability to be present and reduce the urge to constantly engage with screens. Remember, it's important to make Yoga sessions enjoyable and age-appropriate for children, ensuring they view it as a positive and fun activity rather than a chore.

#### **Role of Yoga in various childhood disorders<sup>[7]</sup>**

Yoga plays a significant role in promoting physical, mental, and emotional well-being in children and can be beneficial in managing and preventing various childhood diseases. Its holistic approach addresses the interconnectedness of the body, mind, and spirit, making it a valuable tool in enhancing overall health. Here are some ways in which yoga can positively impact childhood diseases:

**Asthma:** Yoga can help children with asthma by focusing on breath control and breathing exercises. Pranayama (breathwork) techniques, like deep breathing and alternate nostril breathing, can improve lung function and increase respiratory efficiency, leading to better asthma management.

**Obesity and Diabetes:** Childhood obesity and diabetes are on the rise, partly due to sedentary lifestyles. Yoga asanas (poses) involve physical movement that can aid in weight management and regulate blood sugar levels. Additionally, yoga encourages a mindful approach to eating, fostering healthier eating habits.

**Anxiety and Stress:** Children are not immune to stress and anxiety. Yoga's emphasis on relaxation and mindfulness helps reduce stress and promote emotional well-being. Regular practice can equip children with coping mechanisms to manage stressful situations effectively.

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):** Yoga's focus on concentration and mindfulness can benefit children with ADHD. Specific yoga poses and breathing exercises help improve attention span and self-regulation.

**Sleep Disorders:** Yoga's calming effect on the nervous system can aid in alleviating sleep difficulties in children. Relaxing postures and breathing exercises before bedtime can promote better sleep quality.

**Digestive Issues:** Certain yoga poses can aid in digestion by stimulating abdominal organs and promoting better gut health. Poses like Wind-Relieving Pose (Pavanamuktasana) and Child's Pose (Balasana) can be beneficial for children with digestive problems.

**Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD):** Yoga's structured and predictable routines can be helpful for children with ASD. The practice of yoga can enhance body awareness, self-regulation, and social interactions.

**Back Pain and Posture Problems:** Prolonged sitting and improper posture can lead to back pain and musculoskeletal issues in children. Yoga asanas that focus on strengthening the core and back muscles can help alleviate such problems.

**Immune System Support:** Yoga's stress-reducing effects and its impact on the endocrine system can contribute to strengthening the immune system, making children less susceptible to various infections and illnesses.

## CONCLUSION

Yoga offer a multitude of benefits to children, positively influencing their physical health, mental well-being, and overall development. By incorporating these practices into their lives, children can experience improved physical strength, emotional stability, enhanced cognitive abilities, and increased self-esteem. Encouraging children to embrace Yoga fosters habits that will lead to a healthier and more balanced adulthood. As parents, educators and caregivers, let us empower our children to embark on this transformative journey towards well-being and self-discovery.

Today's children require a creative, interactive syllabus, and participatory method in the teaching-learning process. This approach is applicable for learning Yoga too. Thus, if we can communicate with children effectively, they can adopt Yoga as a powerful tool for themselves to minimize stress, as well as develop resilience to deal with it. We believe in the need to focus on research to understand the ways children can enjoy learning Yoga, sustain it in practice, and use it in daily life. They may use Yoga in any kind of emotional and social stress situations. From a social perspective, we anticipate that Yoga can also transform people to be socially sensitive; hence, it may increase the likelihood

of children engaging in civic activities and shaping a better society. Practicing Yoga has the potential to improve the mental health of children. Children and young people are agents who possess the evolving capacity to develop the self and society, and Yoga is a means to attain holistic well-being for both.

## Thus, we present the following recommendations

- (1) Pre-schools, schools, and community centers offer Yoga as part of the opportunities for children to enjoy learning and practicing it from an early age; The results can be observed over the long-term by having future generations experience less stress.
- (2) Develop policies initiating Yoga in schools and training teachers to practice Yoga with children.

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