



Yoga for the Child with Special Needs

By Karen Fakroddin, M.Ed., RYT

The classic definition of yoga is to “still the fluctuations of the mind.” For adults, quieting the mind is often difficult. For children, especially those with special needs, there may be a multitude of challenges that prevent such quieting.” When this process is not smooth, disruptive behavior, an inability to focus and poor quality of engagement can result. Physical challenges and cognitive impairments can further complicate this process. With comprehensive yoga practice, children benefit by learning how to quiet their minds and calm their bodies; this results in improved physical health and sense of self. For children with extra challenges the benefits are extraordinary.

Yoga for children with special needs is based on the methodology created by Sonia Sumar. It is designed to help children who have ADD/ADHD, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, neurological disorders and learning disabilities. Yoga for the Special Child® teachings are based on the Hatha Yoga tradition, which begins by working on the structural systems of the body, alignment, flexibility, and strengthening bones, muscles, and tendons. Internal organs benefit at the same time as they are toned and rejuvenated through the movement and poses of the yoga practice. Eye exercises, sound therapy and breath work, combined with regular yoga poses, affect all the systems of the body. Circulatory, respiratory, digestive, endocrine, neurological, nervous, cardiovascular, lymphatic and pulmonary systems are stimulated and toned, benefitting and balancing the internal body and mind with the external body. For children that struggle with self regulation or sensory processing disorders, yoga tones and stimulates the nervous system, often breaking the “fight or flight” mode, stimulating the parasympathetic system and reorganizing the child’s nervous system.

Regular yoga practice, as an adjunct to other interventions, is an effective therapy that meets the child where he is. The focus is on the child’s abilities, not his

disabilities. Children are assisted with accepting their limitations, using that as a starting base. From that point, the practice significantly enhances the child’s physical, mental and emotional state in a safe, peaceful and gentle manner.

A child’s yoga practice differs from an adult’s practice in that it may include play, noise and lots of movement! A typical children’s class can include breathing exercises, movement and music for eye and hand coordination, and traditional poses such as cobra pose, child pose, and downward dog pose, each adapted to meet the child’s needs and capabilities. A child with special needs benefits from an assessment prior to participation in a yoga class to determine appropriate class placement. A qualified instructor, certified in Yoga for the Special Child®, leads small group classes or private sessions.

The benefits of yoga for children with special needs include improved physical health, attention, and focus; however the greatest benefit frequently observed is improved self awareness and the increased self confidence that comes from being able to control your own body.

For more information on the Yoga for the Special Child® teachings please visit their website at www.specialyoga.com or e-mail the author at ksuefak@aol.com.



Yoga for the Special Child® Naperville

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Sovereign Pediatric Therapy and Karen Fakroddin are pleased to offer:

Yoga for Children with Special Needs



Karen Fakroddin, M.Ed., RYT is a registered yoga teacher with Yoga Alliance and holds a 200-hour level Global Family Yoga certification and a practitioner's license with Yoga for the Special Child®. She has practiced yoga for more than 17 years and is trained in Hatha Yoga for children and families of all ages, children with special needs, adults with special needs, yoga in the classroom and restorative yoga. As a teacher, Karen hopes to create a safe, loving place for her students to experience peace

and quiet in their bodies and minds through a gentle yoga practice. Karen is a mother of a child with special needs, and understands firsthand the challenges that face both the child and the families. She teaches from the heart and has witnessed the significant personal and therapeutic effects yoga has on this special population by focusing on their abilities and potential as unique individuals.

Sovereign Pediatric Therapy is hosting two four-week yoga sessions at our Naperville office on Mondays during the summer. An assessment is recommended prior to class participation.



Summer Session I - Mondays, June 11 - July 2 (registration deadline June 4th)

Summer Session II - Mondays, July 9 - July 30 (registration deadline July 7th)

9:15-10:00 am Class for Children ages 5-10 years

10:15-11:00 am Class for Children ages 11-17 years

11:00-1:00 am Private and Semi Private Yoga classes

Cost

Assessment: \$30 half-hour individual assessment with Yoga instructor recommended prior to group participation*

Group Classes: \$90 for a four-class session

Private Yoga 45 minutes: \$62 per class
Four classes for \$225 (10% savings)

Semi-private 45 minutes: \$35 per individual per class

**An assessment is recommended prior to enrollment in group sessions to determine best placement for child.*

No refund is given for missed sessions. Payment via cash or check must be made prior to class of each session. Minimum of four registered participants required for group classes. Enrollment is limited, so please call early.

For questions and/or to arrange an assessment, contact Karen Fakroddin at 630.835.6487 or ksuefak@aol.com or call Sovereign Pediatric Therapy at 630.585.7337.



Do you have questions or concerns regarding your child's development?

Sovereign Pediatric Therapy offers free screenings. Call any office to schedule. For

more information regarding our physical therapy services or to schedule an appointment, call 630.585.7337.

Want to share this News Brief with your co-workers or friends? Visit our website at www.sovrehab.com and click the Pediatric Clinics tab at the top of our home page. See the informational topics available and click the links for past issues of News Brief.

The Staff of Sovereign Pediatric Therapy wishes all of you a happy and safe summer.



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