

# Q & A with A Child's Place Yoga Teachers, Kate and Carly

## ***Is preschool yoga like adult yoga?***

Yes and no. We do many of the same poses but those poses are woven into a fun class tapping into imagination. Children don't hold poses for a long time because their young bodies aren't meant to yet. Children's yoga isn't quiet like adult yoga (except for relaxation) because they need to express themselves verbally to integrate the movement into their body and brain. They can moo like a cow and meow like a cat in those poses – you don't hear that in adult yoga! We talk about what they notice about their body and mind after a pose or game.

## ***What happens in my preschooler's yoga class?***

We combine movement, songs, yoga poses, games, stories and meeting animal puppets into a yoga adventure or theme based class. Theme based classes are around seasons, classroom curriculum, or student interest. On adventures we may go to the rain forest one week and a magical land the next. We decide how to get there (airplane, boat...), who/what is there once we get there (animals, trees, flowers...), and then we head back to our mats for relaxation. During relaxation, each preschooler gets a "yoga friend" (a small stuffed animal) to place on his/her chest or belly. Kids lie on their back and watch their friend rise and fall to the movement of their breath. Every class involves movement, breath, focus activities, music and relaxation.

## ***Why is yoga good for my preschooler?***

Yoga is a fun and natural way for kids to move, imagine, develop concentration, build self-esteem and find inner peace. Yoga offers a non-competitive alternative to sports while still building strength, coordination and balance. Guided relaxation is part of every class and learning how to relax is an important life skill. Yoga helps kids sleep better which is the foundation for a happy and healthy body and mind.

## ***How can we do yoga at home?***

Simply sitting on the floor with legs crossed is a great practice for you and your child. If you have stuffed animals, you can ask your child what kind of movements the animals make. They'll probably say, "oh, I know this, we did this pose in yoga!" Don't worry about knowing how to do an exact pose – you can make up animal poses by mimicking the movement of the animal (dogs are on all fours and stretch their tail up into the sky...whales swim on their belly and have a big tail that goes up at the end of their body). You can bring awareness of breath by imagining smelling things, blowing light objects off hands, and taking a deep breath in then smiling as you let it out.