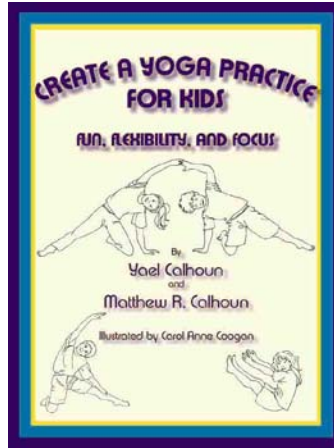
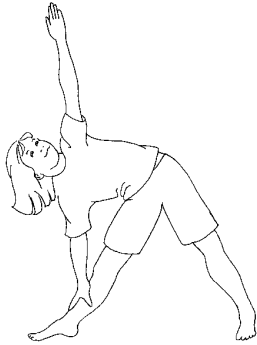


# Babying the Buddha: Yoga by Kindra Fehr

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Charlotte Bell, a Salt Lake yoga instructor and author wrote, "There's no substitute for learning something when you're young. What enters into the open, pliable minds of children settles deeply into their cells. What is practiced integrates so profoundly that it weaves into the fabric of their beings."

Her eloquent statement makes a book such as "Create a Yoga Practice for Kids: Fun, Flexibility, and Focus" by Yael Calhoun and Matthew R. Calhoun (Sunstone Press, \$23) a necessity for every parent and teacher today. Yoga is not a belief system or religion. Yet, by its meditative nature, it does promote spiritual growth and awareness through physical movement. A byproduct of a kid's yoga practice is the benefit of developing imagination and creativity through simple visualization, guided imagery, and relaxation.

Yael Calhoun, a mom, long-time yoga practitioner and teacher who lives in Utah, and her cousin Matthew Calhoun, who started a children's yoga program at the Chicago Yoga Institute, present an easy-to-follow guide for the novice to teach yoga to a child. Illustrations by Carol Anne Coogan offer a quick reference as to how each pose should look.

The authors have developed an easy 1-2-3 system to create a 45-minute practice simply by choosing from a variety of poses in each category: Opening Poses, Themes, and Relaxation Poses. They have also included a "More Yoga Fun" section with games, visualizations, and a five-minute yoga break for the classroom. Each pose is followed by a "what to say" script and the benefits of that pose. They give the postures fun names such as Snowball, Butterfly, Pretzel, Rainbow, and Sea

Star. There is a guide to the Sanskrit names in the back of the book.

As a children's art teacher, I have tried some of the sequences to fill the last five minutes of a class when students finish early. I've found it to be a good way to bring focus back and center the children before they continue their day. As a mom of a three year old, I find yoga can be a great opportunity to bond with my child in a playful way and a chance to give myself a moment to breathe, relax and balance (both literally and figuratively). My daughter and I already have a special "yoga bond" that started in my prenatal yoga practice, continued through mom and baby classes, and into our practice today. "Create a Yoga Practice for Kids" opened exciting possibilities and variety for us. Now, my daughter pulls out the yoga mats and asks, "Should we do yoga?" As the authors state, yoga "allows kids to use a lot of energy, make funny noises, relax, and learn to focus all at the same time." What kid wouldn't love that?

Kindra Fehr is an artist and mom to toddler Aria Hancock. She co-instructs the Salt Lake Art Center's KidsmART program.



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