



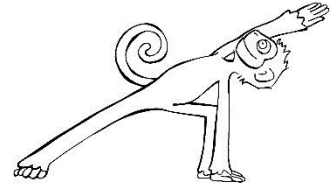
Art and Yoga Curriculum Kit



for Children with Autism
and Special Needs




Green Tree Yoga
Yoga for You



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All Shanti the Monkey© artwork by Svea Lunøe,
Illustrator for *Yoga Makes Me Feel ...* by Yael Calhoun (Lila Press, 2011)

Cover design© by Sam Tresco. CD cover by Sam Tresco.

Please contact Yael Calhoun with any and all questions about how to use this curriculum, discounts on materials, or any other related issues.

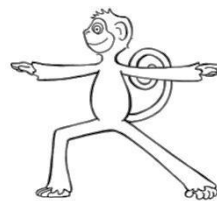
greentreeyoga@comcast.net 801-656-7885

Yael is available to do trainings or workshops in person or by webcam.

Disclaimer

This curriculum is intended as a general guide for practicing yoga. It is to be used with the understanding that the authors and publisher are not giving advice to individuals who should seek professional medical services before engaging in or sharing physical activity. If you are uncertain about your physical abilities or those of the children with whom you work, please consult an appropriate health care professional.

Therefore, the authors and publisher take no responsibility for any liability, loss, or risk taken by individuals as a result of applying the suggestions put forth in this book.

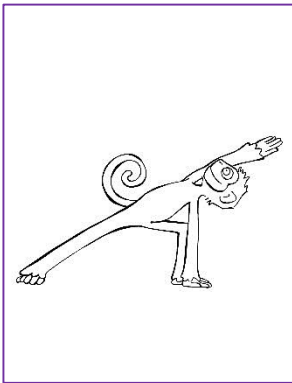


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Children with Autism and Differing Needs

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6. Appendices

A. Weekly Communication with Parents



It is important to provide the opportunity for parents to give you feedback each week. Sample emails are included in Appendix A. These emails in digital format are available at: <http://greentreeyoga.org/Blog/art-and-yoga/> (use Chrome as the browser)

- a. Introductory email
- b. Follow-up emails to parents
- c. Shanti the Monkey coloring sheets for each week
- d. Final feedback email

B. Class Schedule Cards



The purpose is to provide predictability for children. A similar chart will be emailed (above) before the first class to each of the parents to review with their children. Parents can explain the order of the class so the children know exactly what to expect.

C. Teacher Class Schedule for Clipboard

CLIPBOARD SHEET Week 1: Triangle		
TIME (of class)		
I. _____	I. Circle Time (5 minutes)	a. Hello Song b. Review yoga they shared at home Yoga Notes:
II. _____	II. Yoga (15 minutes) GENTLE FIST BREATHING	
III. _____	I. Art (20 minutes)	
IV. _____	II. Yoga (10 minutes)	IV. CD Break and Art Pose of the Day Track 5 (3 minutes) Seated Twist and Gentle Fist Breathing
V. _____	V. Circle Time (10 minutes)	a. Review yoga Pose each wants to share at home b. Goodbye Song

Each week use the corresponding sheet to organize your class. A sheet for each of the six classes and a master template is included.* Keep this sheet on a clipboard by your mat. It is very important to keep to your schedule. Having a sheet on a clipboard helps you to know that you will have time for each class component. Because each component is linked to another, it is not effective to just leave one out. It is also confusing to the children.

Please know that using the clipboard makes you look as though you care about presenting a professional program.

*<http://greentreeyoga.org/Blog/art-and-yoga/> (use Chrome as the browser)

D. Shanti the Monkey Flip Chart



Most children are visual learners. Having a flip chart (8.5 x 12 inch) of Shanti the Monkey provides:

- 1) a consistent and engaging visual reminder of what you are doing;
- 2) an order to the practice, something that is especially important for children of differing abilities; and,
- 3) a visual link back to the Shanti coloring sheet as a way to provide kinesthetic awareness of the pose.

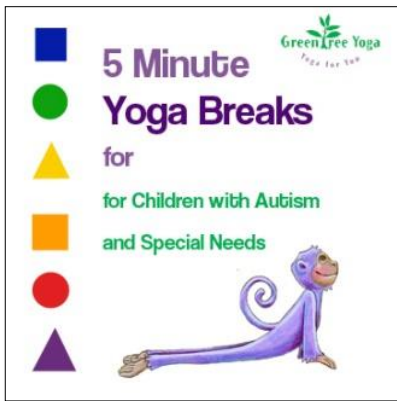
E. Five Minute Yoga Break CD and CD Track Schedule

This Yoga Breaks CD is included for several reasons.

1) Play one yoga break during the second yoga that follows the art. Becoming familiar with the yoga breaks may encourage families to do them at home. The intention of this program is to build a sustainable yoga practice for the children and families.

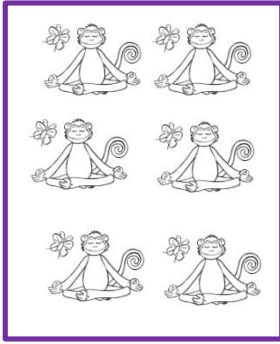
2) At the end of the first class, give each family a CD so they can practice at home as they like. You also can give them the free CD link: <http://greentreeyoga.org/Blog/CD2/> (use Chrome as a browser) or you can purchase CDs at a discounted price from <http://greentreeyoga.org/Blog/art-and-yoga/> (use Chrome as a browser).

3) Listening to the entire CD before you teach can give you a sense of how to pace your teaching and reinforces the ideas outlined in the Teaching Intentions (p. 71).



	New Yoga Pose and Art Project	Mindfulness Breathing Break for Yoga	CD Track for Second Yoga Component after Art Project
Week 1	Triangle	Gentle Fist Breathing	Track 5 (3 minutes) Seated Twist and Gentle Fist Breathing
Week 2	Rocket	Balloon Breath	Track 9 (2 minutes) Tapping and Balloon Breath
Week 3	Tree	Strong Fist	Track 1.A (5 minutes) Tree Pose with Strong Fist Breathing
Week 4	Cobra	Balloon Breath	Track 2.A (5 minutes) Cobra with Balloon Breath
Week 5	Warrior 2	Counting Breath	Track 4.A (5 minutes) Warrior 2 with Counting Breath
Week 6	Eagle	Strong Fist Breathing	Track 7 (3 minutes) Seated Tall Mountain with Strong Fist Breathing

CD Track Schedule



F. Shanti the Monkey Home Contest and Instructions for Prizes

This home contest is offered as a way to reinforce the mindfulness breathing and yoga at home. Every time the child teaches a pose to someone, uses a breathing break to self-regulate, or suggests that a family member use a breathing break, the child puts a Shanti square in a jar or colors a Shanti square on the fridge sheet.

At the end of the six weeks, the child can win Shanti the Monkey posters (11x17 inch) from the book *Yoga Makes Me Feel...*, a Shanti flip chart (5 x 7 inch) or a coloring book.

Shanti the Monkey Posters from the book *Yoga Makes Me Feel ...*



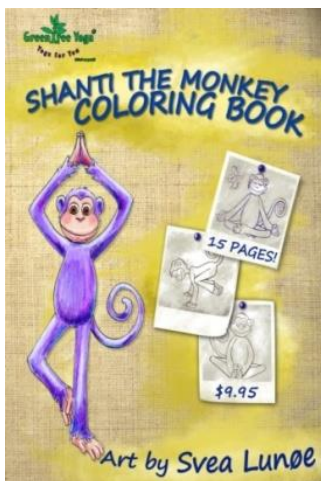
You can purchase all products at discounted rates from greentreeyoga@comcast.net or <http://greentreeyoga.org/Blog/art-and-yoga/> (use Chrome browser)

G. Shanti the Monkey Coloring Book

Giving the families the coloring book at the end of the program is a way to extend the yoga learning. Folks are encouraged to make copies of the pages so children can share the experience with siblings and friends.

The coloring pages serve as a reminder and a review to the children. In addition, there are new poses to spark children's curiosity.

You can purchase these at discounted rates from greentreeyoga@comcast.net or <http://greentreeyoga.org/Blog/art-and-yoga/>



H. Templates for the Art Projects

Templates for each of the art projects are included to give each child a point from which to create a pleasing project. If a child has another idea, please be open to that also.

What Professionals are Saying:



“Greentree Yoga continues to make awesome contributions to children with special needs with this compendium. It is written concisely and is directed to the unique needs of kids with disabilities with fostering their relaxation, coordination, mindfulness and well-being. Yael Calhoun uses her intuitive insights gained over thirty years of teaching.”

~ Louis Allen, MD, FAAP, Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics.

Founder, AbleDifferently. abledifferently.com.

“So nice to see the work you've done - excellent job! Good to have a program designed for these children that may struggle in grade-level classrooms, yet may not fit in with more involved children. A great curriculum!”

~ Scott A. Anderson, E-RYT 500 Certification, AlignmentYoga.com YogAutism.org

“The GreenTREE Art and Yoga Curriculum Kit is a state-of-the-art resource for any service provider working with children who have autism, special needs and/or other challenges. The content systematically addresses key skills that we know are essential to promote resiliency, particularly self-regulation, relaxation and social skills. Yael Calhoun’s vast experience as an educator and her specialization in trauma-informed yoga is reflected in brain-based strategies such her emphasis on creating safety and recognizing potential sensory triggers. The curriculum combines yoga, art and breathing exercises to stimulate brain development, learning and skills that every child needs to succeed. The supports provided, including visual aids with the kid-friendly and colorful Shanti the Monkey, scripting and a practice CD ensure that yoga and art are accessible for every child and instructor. This curriculum kit has broad applications in many settings and I will be using it in my work.”

~ Linda Chamberlain, PhD MPH, Founding Director,
Alaska Family Violence Prevention Project

“The Art & Yoga Curriculum is thoughtfully designed to promote integration of physical awareness, creative expression, and emotional resilience within a fun, safe, and structured environment. It is a brilliant program for children with differing abilities, and it works!”

~ Carla Anderson, B.I.S., RYT

What Professionals are Saying:



"Art and Yoga" concentrates on what a child can do. It limits excessive vocabulary, is visually orientated and is acute to all sensory issues. A true success ... it encompasses all that is positive.

Art and Yoga provides both the classroom teacher and parent tools on how Yoga can benefit children not only for the moment but in their daily lives. It provides an alternative way to incorporate yoga and art for children to reach their full potential. Yael Calhoun has a thoughtful and comprehensive approach that really works!!! I highly recommend this manual to all classroom teachers and parents. I only wish it was available while I was working in the field ... A wonderful addition to any classroom."
 ~ Shelley Schwartz, M.A.

"The autism community has a thoughtful and dynamic new resource with the The GreenTREE Art and Yoga Curriculum Kit. This curriculum incorporates effective teaching principles for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other special needs.

Visual supports are utilized throughout the curriculum to assist in teaching the yoga and breathing techniques. Concrete concepts and examples are embedded within a variety of learning modalities to guide the instruction. Limited language processing, colorful graphics, and hands-on activities support positive teaching to facilitate successful learning and recall.

Ultimately, this comprehensive approach creates a highly motivating and effective curriculum to promote regulation, attention, body awareness and relaxation through engaging movement and art exercises. A practice CD and bright beautiful illustrations make this a valuable teaching tool that can easily be implemented in home and classroom settings. Yael Calhoun has used her unique insight, experience and talents to develop a creative and delightful resource that will greatly benefit young children with special needs in wonderful new ways."

~ Lori Krasny, M.S., CCC-SLP, Director of Autism Services,
 The Children's Center, Salt Lake City, Utah

What Parents are Saying:



Thank you so much for this. We have worked on a lot of the breathing exercises H. likes the one where he does a fist and breathes out. He has a really difficult time with body awareness and motor planning, so this had been a really great (and fun!) addition to our therapies. I also love that there is a social component to it as well. Thank you so much again!

S. does enjoy the yoga class, and to my big surprise even art!!!

H. loves the yoga and it's really a great tool for both of my boys. We love this class. A great program!

I was so excited too when P. finally participated ... The little things are great!

We loved it. Just the right amount of yoga and fun. Looking forward to more!

One of my sons benefited from the motor planning and another greatly benefited from the breath.

Really appreciated the continued improvement of core balance in a non-therapy setting.

Following direction and imitating was huge for K. To follow direction and imitate with her body was great to see -- she used to not even look at the person or have any interest in trying just up until about 6 months ago.

What was helpful about the program:

- ~ Having a schedule to follow
- ~ Having the yoga mats for sense of space
- ~ Including the kids for suggestions and choices
- ~ Loved the art, best projects and she has them all hanging up and loves to show them to people.
- ~ The art projects always had a lot of different sensory components.
- ~ Learning relaxation techniques, especially ones to use at home and in school.



Acknowledgements

Without the inspiration and contributions of the following people, this project would still be nothing more than notes on my computer, hastily written after summer camps and classroom programs. So it is with much gratitude that I offer each person a special note of thanks for taking the time to identify ways both to inspire and to improve this project. I also want to give you, the parent, teacher, or care provider, a sense of the expertise that these people have offered to guide this program at all stages. It developed over three years of pilot projects, reviews, and more programs. This project had a definite beginning, middle and end, with key people at each point. So in order of involvement, thank you to ...

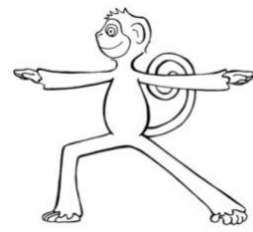
Lori Krasny, M.S., CCC-SLP, Director of Autism Services at The Children’s Center in Salt Lake City, approached me several years ago with the idea of bringing some type of yoga to her program. We did a pilot, and from there the project gradually became more formalized. Lori’s enthusiasm, knowledge and patience were both inspiring and key to the project.

Shelley Schwartz, MA, a retired social worker who devoted her 30 year career to working with children on the spectrum in New York, helped review the CD and the written materials. Guided by her sustained sharing of expertise, I was able to create a CD and fine-tune the project.

Dawn Young, E-RTY, worked with me in several of the summer programs, sharing her passion for yoga and her years of experience working with children of differing abilities, especially children on the spectrum. Dawn also sat on my deck for hours, discussing the program and cutting out triangles and rocket materials for our first camp. Dawn is delightful to watch teach, and she kept the sense of lila, or play, alive. She showed me the possibilities.

Carla Anderson, E-RTY, lent her skills in both teaching and editing, making this a much richer product. Carla has an uncommon knack for being able to take a big picture look at a project and yet finely focus on the details. Carla brought a special interest in children with autism to GreenTREE Yoga, for which I am thankful. Carla read and reread the manuscript, each time providing valuable insights and asking strong questions.

Many thanks to the principals, teachers, parents, and students who allowed me to visit their classrooms and share yoga. Without their willingness to try new things, we would be unable to confidently state, “This program works well – kids love it!”



Acknowledgements

Scott Anderson, E-RYT 500 Hour Certification

Scott Anderson has developed a wonderful yoga program for children on the spectrum, Scott took the time to review the project and share his ideas and support. These final reviews are a key to building confidence in people who want to use the program. Thank you for supporting our vision with such enthusiasm.

AlignmentYoga.com. YogAutism.org

Linda Chamberlain, PhD, MPH, shared her expertise in the field as she reviewed the program and offered insights. In addition, Linda continues to provide ideas about how to bring this resource to more people, demonstrating her continued commitment to sharing the benefits of yoga with diverse and underserved populations. Linda's extensive background in serving underserved populations, in creating many books and support materials, and presenting nationally on the issues, provided strong expertise in the review process.

Without the continual, gentle guidance of **Louis, Allen, MD**, this program would not have been completed in any sort of timely manner. Louis still provides direction and inspiration for the program. His nonprofit, AbleDifferently, awarded scholarships for children to attend the summer programs, which allowed us to continue testing the program. He shared invaluable expertise, vision, and dedication to helping children of differing needs find joy in life. I cannot thank Louis enough for seeing the potential of the project and not letting it go. It greatly helped that I saw him every week at a yoga class – I was greatly inspired to have something new to report to him on the progress! And he was able to ask his gentle questions, “I wonder what it would be like if we ...”

Many special thanks to our illustrator extraordinaire, **Svea Lunøe**, whose precious and captivating monkey, Shanti, continues to draw children to the magic (well, benefits) of yoga. Thank you for your willingness to keep drawing the many iterations needed for this project!

Sam Tresco – thanks for sharing, in so many ways, your artistic talents and special energy. And thank you for co-teaching all those kids' yoga classes with me so many years ago when you were a kid.

And so, to everyone who contributed time and energy and expertise, I hope you are as pleased as I am with how we all helped this happen.

A celebration of synergy!

Namaste,

Yael Calhoun



Introduction

This detailed curriculum is a general guide to support people who want to share yoga with children with autism and differing abilities. All of the yoga can be done standing, seated in a chair, or seated against a wall to accommodate all abilities. The format is easy to follow and to implement. The program provides a one-hour class for six weeks of Art and Yoga. Each class consists of a yoga practice, a mindfulness breathing practice, and an art project. It also includes ideas for parents to do at home to reinforce the benefits of yoga and mindfulness breathing.

Yoga

The yoga is designed to build sensory skills, body awareness, muscle strength, focus, balance, and techniques for self-regulation and relaxation. Yoga is a perfect fit for the healthcare needs of these children, addressing physical, social, and emotional components. Yoga can incorporate deep pressure, repetition, relaxation, body awareness, visual cues, and visualization. Very simply, yoga is a good fit because it is intuitive and fun. Kids love yoga. And that fact provides a wonderful starting point from which to offer yoga's healing benefits.

Mindfulness Breathing

Each yoga component includes mindfulness breathing practices that combine movement and breath awareness. Mindfulness breathing is an evidence-based approach to teaching people to self-regulate, to build body awareness, and to control stress. This curriculum includes fun breathing breaks that children like to do and to teach to others.

In addition, the yoga and mindfulness breathing offers specific healthcare benefits to children with autism and differing abilities. Simple yoga stretches and breathing techniques can improve:

- ~ body awareness
- ~ flexibility
- ~ stress management techniques
- ~ ability to sense the cues of stress for self-regulation
- ~ self-confidence
- ~ physical strength

Art

The art program is designed to provide a forum for creative self-expression and to use sensory skills. In addition, the art component offers a wonderful opportunity for social skill development as the children interact during the creation of the art project. The social component has proven to be as important as the art opportunity.



The art component reinforces each new weekly yoga pose. It also provides opportunity for sensory experiences because the art projects utilize a variety of materials chosen for their sensory appeal and diversity. The projects are designed to provide for a variety of artistic needs and skills. The project can be done in a new and creative way, or the project can be done as suggested to ensure success. The children take home a satisfying project to remind them of the yoga pose of the week.

Parents attend the class with their children, providing an opportunity for positive family interaction and for the parents to learn the stress management techniques to practice at home. Including parents is a successful part of the program. In fact, an eight-year-old autistic girl taught a breathing technique to another child in her social skills class.

A Special Note:

Set both the children and yourself up for success by putting sufficient time into organizing and implementing the yoga and the art. Please spend some time with the Teaching Tips section to ensure that you successfully communicate in order to share the many benefits of yoga.

Yes, there are many teaching tips. Teaching children of differing needs is much different than teaching a typical kids' yoga class. Please treat this opportunity as one in which you can grow as a teacher by putting in the extra effort into considering those differences. I think you will be pleased that many of these teaching tips will strengthen your other teaching also.

The time you put into preparation and practicing the Teaching Intentions will provide a strong base from which to do the most important thing with children – help them to find joy in life.

Namaste,

Yael Calhoun, MA, MS, E-RYT

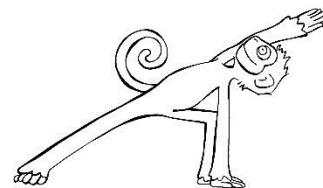
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I am available to do trainings or workshops in person or by webcam.



About the Author:



Yael Calhoun, MA, MS, E-RYT is a long time educator and author, with a strong background in education and teaching yoga as a tool to deal with special needs, trauma, stress, depression, anxiety and compassion fatigue. She is a writer/series editor of over a dozen books. She has developed books, DVDs/CDs, and manuals on yoga, including yoga for children with trauma, caregivers, classrooms, and cancer survivors. Currently, Yael is the co-founder and Executive Director of GreenTREE Yoga, a 501c3 nonprofit charity, dedicated to bringing the benefits of yoga to people of all ages and abilities, and to those who serve them, in a variety of settings, including: schools, veterans' facilities, community organizations/groups, substance abuse recovery centers, and senior centers.

Yael's education includes an undergraduate degree from Brown University, a Master of Arts in Education from SCSU, and a Master of Science from University of Rhode Island. In addition, Yael is a certified yoga instructor: (E-RYT) and a CRYT (children's yoga) both through Yoga Alliance and is certified in Trauma-Sensitive Yoga (The Trauma Center at the Justice Resource Institute).

Please contact Yael with any questions:

801-656-7885

yoga@greentreeyoga.net

ART AND YOGA

One Hour Class Format

Sequencing Cards



I. Circle Time (5 minutes)



II. Yoga (15 minutes)



III. Art (20 minutes)



IV. Yoga (10 minutes)



V. Circle Time (10 minutes)

Use:

- (1) Sequencing Cards (Appendix B)**
- (2) Teacher Class Schedule for Clipboard (Appendix C)**



I. Circle Time

Note: Explain that you will be singing and clapping softly. Many children are quite sensitive to noise.

1. Hello Song*

Sit in a circle so you can all sing an opening song. Go around the circle and sing the song to each child. Before you start singing, ask the child to pick what s/he would like everyone to do as you sing. On week one, start with two choices: clapping softly or snapping fingers.

One such song could be an adaptation of this song with a clapping or snapping motion as you sing: “Hello, name, Hello name, Hello name, We’re glad you came to yoga.” As appropriate, you can add a new choice each week. The children will have ideas too. For example, clap, snap fingers, pat hands on legs, tap shoulders – all tactile, sensory motions.

*If a child comes in late, please pause what you are doing if possible and sing that child the Hello Song.

2. Sharing a Pose

After week one, ask each child by name what pose s/he shared at home this week.

II. Yoga

Yoga Sequence.

Note:

- (1) If you take out poses to adapt to your class needs, keep the sequence the same.*
- (2) Keep the two mindfulness breathing and tapping in all classes.*
- (3) The following poses are represented on the flip chart (Appendix D). Have the flip chart on a small display stand next to you.*
- (4) The teaching script for these poses is in Section 4.*



- ❖ Lion Pose
- ❖ Mindfulness Breathing and Tapping*
- ❖ Seated Twist
- ❖ Butterfly
- ❖ Cat/Cow
- ❖ Snowball/Snowflake
- ❖ Downdog
- ❖ Mountain/Star
- ❖ Pose of the Day (add one new pose each week to the flip chart)



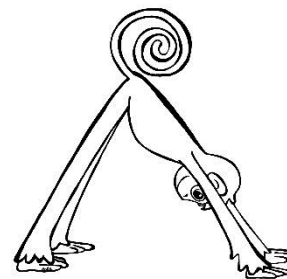
1. Triangle
2. Rocket
3. Tree
4. Cobra
5. Warrior Two
6. Eagle

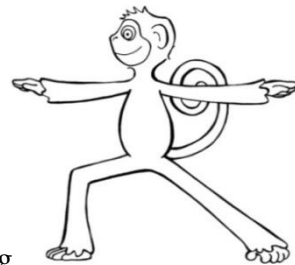


- ❖ Mindfulness Breathing and Tapping

*Mindfulness Breathing and Tapping includes one breathing and one tapping exercise:

- Strong Fist Breathing
- Gentle Fist Breathing
- Balloon Breath
- Counting Breath
- Tapping Visualization (two choices)





III. Art

The art project instructions are presented with the following directions.

Materials

It is best to collect all the materials a week ahead of time.

Preparation

Each activity takes some preparation time, so leave time to recruit volunteers to help prepare the templates and craft materials.

Activity

Some children may not finish their art projects, which is fine. Please be prepared to give them the materials necessary to complete the project at home. For example, in the triangle project, have an envelope to put triangle pieces they may want to use at home. You do not want to rush the children to finish, so make it clear they can finish it later. You need to keep to the schedule so they get the full experience and benefits.

If a child misses a class, it can be a positive experience to give them the materials to do the art project at home. Invite them to bring it next week to show you.



IV. Yoga (10 minutes)

- a. Do the pose of the day again, perhaps with the art project on the front of the mat.
- a. Do one track from the yoga break CD according to the CD schedule. (Appendix C and E) It is important to introduce and practice something for parents to do at home. Each family should receive a free CD on the first day.
- c. As time allows, invite the children to pick a favorite pose. Perhaps a child would like to lead the pose.

V. Circle Time (10 minutes)

1. Sharing a Pose

Ask each child what pose s/he would like to teach someone at home this week.

2. Goodbye Song

Note: Explain that you will be singing and clapping softly. Many children are quite sensitive to noise.

Sit in a circle and ask each child what s/he would like everyone to do as you sing the goodbye song: week one start with two choices: clapping softly or snapping fingers.

One such song could be an adaptation of this song with a motion (clapping or snapping as you sing): “Hello, name, Hello name, Hello name, we’re glad you came to yoga.” As the children are ready, you can add choices in a new week – and the children many have some ideas too. Examples include: clap, snap fingers, pat hands on legs, tap shoulders, which are all tactile, sensory motions.