
Heart Space Yoga School



40 hrs Kids Yoga Teacher Training

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Hello and Welcome — I'm so happy you're here. My name is Sophie, and it truly means the world to me that you've chosen to trust me to guide you on this beautiful journey into children's yoga. Whether this path has been calling to you for a long time or you've only just discovered it, please know that you belong here.

As you begin this training, I invite you to do something very special — to gently reconnect with your own inner child. To remember how it feels to move with curiosity, to laugh freely, to imagine without limits, and to see the world through soft, wonder-filled eyes. Teaching children starts with meeting that part of ourselves first.

This training has been created with so much love, care, and intention — to support you not only in learning how to guide yoga for children, but in rediscovering playfulness, compassion, and heart-led leadership within yourself. Thank you for placing your trust in me and in Heart Space Yoga. I feel deeply honoured to walk beside you as you step into this next chapter.

With much Love,

Namaste

Sophie x

Meet Luna – The Heart Space Yoga Bear



Luna is the heart and soul of Heart Space Yoga Kids.

With her **soft lavender fur**, **gentle eyes**, and **heart held front and centre**, Luna leads with love in everything she does. Resting over her chest is her glowing heart — a reminder that we always begin by listening inward. Her **beautiful floral crown** sits proudly on her head, gently reminding her (and us) of the quiet strength, wisdom, and magic that lives within every child. Luna is a little queen — not because she rules, but because she leads with kindness, curiosity, and compassion.

Luna was lovingly created to help **co-teach the Heart Space Yoga Kids Yoga Teacher Training**, and she has a very special role. She invites us to experience this training **through the eyes, heart, and soul of a child**.

Before we can truly support children, Luna reminds us that we must first reconnect with our **own inner child**.

Through Luna, we are gently guided to:

- Rediscover playfulness, imagination, and wonder
- Approach teaching with softness instead of pressure
- Remember what it feels like to learn through stories, movement, and emotion
- Lead with heart rather than perfection

Luna helps us pause, soften, and ask:

“How would this feel to a child?”

“Is this safe, kind, and empowering?”

“Where is the joy in this moment?”

As we journey through the Kids Yoga Teacher Training, Luna walks beside us as a reminder that children don’t need us to be flawless teachers — they need us to be **present, playful, and heartfelt**. When we allow our own inner child to step forward, we naturally create classes that feel safe, magical, and deeply connecting.

Luna teaches us that yoga for children is not about shapes or silence — it is about **connection, expression, emotional safety, and joy**.

With Luna leading the way, we return again and again to the heart — because when the heart leads, everything else follows ✨



1. Introduction to Kids Yoga

Yoga for children is far more than stretching and poses—it is a joyful, imaginative journey into self-awareness, connection, and emotional regulation. At its heart, children’s yoga honours the whole child: body, mind, emotions, nervous system, and inner world.

Unlike adult yoga, which often emphasises stillness, discipline, and refinement of posture, kids’ yoga embraces play, creativity, spontaneity, storytelling, rhythm, and repetition. Children do not learn by sitting still for long periods; they learn by *moving, imitating, laughing, experimenting, and engaging their imagination*. Yoga for children meets them exactly where they are developmentally, emotionally, and energetically.

The Heart Space Way: How We Teach Kids Yoga

At Heart Space Yoga, children’s yoga is not about getting children to “behave” or “be calm.” It’s about creating a space where children feel safe enough to be themselves — and supported enough to come home to their bodies, their breath, and their inner world.

This is the Heart Space approach in a nutshell:

- **Safety over stillness** — we don’t demand quiet bodies; we create felt safety.
- **Connection over control** — behaviour is communication, not something to “fix.”
- **Choice over compliance** — we offer options and invite participation, never force it.

- **Play as regulation** — joy, laughter, rhythm, and imagination help the nervous system settle.
- **Inclusion is the foundation** — every child belongs, exactly as they are.
- **The teacher's nervous system matters** — our calm, grounded presence becomes the anchor children borrow.

A Heart Space kids yoga teacher is not a performer and not a disciplinarian. You are a guide, a co-regulator, and a gentle leader — holding a steady container where children can move, feel, express, and grow.

Children's yoga is rooted in the understanding that movement is a child's first language. Through embodied play, children make sense of their experiences, regulate their nervous systems, and develop a sense of safety within their own bodies.

We will explore yoga poses in much more detail later in the training. For now, it's enough to understand that in children's yoga, poses are simply one of many tools we use to support regulation, confidence, and connection.

As Lisa Flynn shares in *Yoga for Children* (2013, p. 4):

“Children are naturally present. They are curious, they are aware, they are embodied. When we offer them yoga, we are honouring those qualities and offering tools that will nourish their lifelong development.”

Yoga Is More Than Poses: Life Skills for Little Humans

Kids yoga isn't only about movement — it's also about how we relate: to our bodies, our feelings, and each other. In the yoga tradition, there are simple guiding principles called the **Yamas and Niyamas**. You don't need to teach the Sanskrit words to children, but you *can* bring the meaning to life through stories, themes, and gentle language.

For children, this might sound like:

- **Kindness** (to ourselves, and to others)
- **Honesty** (naming feelings with care)
- **Gratitude** (noticing what is good)
- **Contentment** (enough-ness)
- **Courage** (trying again, even when it's hard)
- **Respect** (for bodies, boundaries, and differences)

This is where kids yoga becomes something truly powerful: a playful practice that quietly teaches emotional literacy, empathy, and self-trust.

Rather than trying to *teach* children to be mindful, yoga preserves and strengthens the mindfulness they already possess. The role of the kids yoga teacher is not to impose calm or control behaviour, but to *create conditions* in which regulation, confidence, and connection can naturally emerge. In Heart Space terms, we create a space where children can practise kindness, courage, and self-awareness — without shame, pressure, or performance.

How Yoga Supports Children

Yoga offers children practical, embodied tools they can carry into everyday life. These tools support both immediate regulation and long-term emotional resilience.

Yoga helps children to:

- **Tune into their breath to regulate big emotions**

Breath becomes a bridge between feeling and response. Through playful techniques such as balloon breathing, bubble breaths, or “dragon exhales,” children learn how to calm their bodies during moments of anxiety, frustration, overwhelm, or excitement. This supports emotional self-regulation and impulse control.

- **Move their bodies to develop strength, flexibility, and balance**

Yoga builds physical literacy in a non-competitive, inclusive way. Children develop coordination, proprioception, spatial awareness, and muscular strength while learning that movement can feel *good*, empowering, and expressive rather than pressured or performance-based.

- **Explore stillness and rest in ways that feel accessible and safe**

Rest is a learned skill—and one that many children struggle with in a fast-paced world. Through guided relaxation, visualisation, and storytelling, children experience rest without being forced into silence or stillness. Over time, this supports nervous system regulation and improved sleep patterns.

- **Feel confident in their bodies and emotions**

Yoga encourages body acceptance rather than body comparison. Children learn that all bodies move differently, that there is no “right” way to do a pose, and that emotions are something to notice—not suppress or fear. This nurtures self-trust and emotional literacy.

- **Build social-emotional skills such as empathy, cooperation, and communication**

Through partner poses, group games, mindful listening, and shared rituals, children learn how to connect respectfully with others. Yoga becomes a space where cooperation matters more than competition and where emotional expression is welcomed.

Why Kids Yoga Matters

We are living in a time where many children experience high levels of stimulation, pressure, and emotional load from a very young age. Rising anxiety, difficulty concentrating, emotional dysregulation, and sleep challenges are increasingly common.

Yoga offers children a safe, predictable, and nurturing space where they can slow down, reconnect with themselves, and feel supported exactly as they are.

Through mindful movement and breath, children begin to understand their inner world. They learn that feelings move, bodies communicate, and calm is something they can *access from within*.

In *The Whole-Brain Child*, Siegel & Bryson (2011, p. 43) explain:

“When a child learns to connect breath to emotion, they’re learning to regulate themselves from the inside out.”

Yoga supports the integration of the emotional and logical parts of the brain, helping children respond rather than react. Over time, this strengthens emotional resilience and self-awareness.

Benefits of Kids Yoga include:

- Improved emotional regulation and impulse control
- Reduced stress and anxiety
- Greater focus and concentration
- Enhanced body awareness and coordination
- Increased empathy and peer connection
- Improved sleep quality and relaxation

Learning Objectives for This Module

By the end of this module, trainees will be able to:

- Understand the philosophy, purpose, and scope of yoga for children
- Identify key differences between adult yoga and children’s yoga
- Recognise the emotional, cognitive, and physical benefits of kids yoga
- Begin to reflect on their role as a facilitator of safety, play, and regulation

- Appreciate children’s yoga as a preventative and supportive wellbeing practice
- Recognise the Heart Space approach: safety, choice, inclusion, and co-regulation as the foundation of kids yoga
- Understand how simple yoga values (kindness, truth, gratitude, contentment) can be shared through themes and stories



Reflection & Discussion Prompts

Take time to journal or discuss:

- What drew you to children’s yoga at this point in your life?
- How were movement, rest, and play treated when you were a child?
- What messages did you receive about your body growing up?
- What would it mean to be a *guide* rather than a *guru* for the children you teach?
- When you were a child, what helped you feel emotionally safe and seen?
- What “life skill” do you feel most called to weave into your kids yoga teaching (kindness, courage, confidence, calm, belonging) — and why?

Practice Exploration: Embodying Kids Yoga

Pair up with another trainee.

Teach a **5-minute playful yoga experience** as if your partner were 5 years old. Focus less on poses and more on *energy, connection, and imagination*.

Consider:

- What sparks curiosity and joy?
- How does your voice shape the experience?
- How does pacing affect regulation?

- What feels supportive—and what feels overwhelming?

After teaching, receive gentle feedback on:

- Clarity of language
- Energy and presence
- Playfulness and engagement

Then switch roles.

This exploration allows you to *feel* the difference between adult-led instruction and child-centred facilitation.

“Children are not things to be moulded, but people to be unfolded.”

– Jess Lair

Before we explore child development, take a moment to remember this: **children learn through relationship**. They learn through safety, repetition, rhythm, and play. The more we understand how children grow and what they need at each stage, the more skillfully we can create yoga experiences that feel joyful, inclusive, and deeply supportive.

As we move into the next section, we will deepen our understanding of **child development**, allowing us to design yoga experiences that are age-appropriate, inclusive, and supportive of every child’s unique stage of growth.



2. Child Development & Yoga

Understanding how children grow physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially is essential when designing yoga classes that are not only developmentally appropriate but truly supportive and inclusive. Children are not miniature adults—they are whole people experiencing rapid transformation across multiple domains. As educators and facilitators, our role is to honour the child in front of us at *each unique stage* of their growth.

A Heart Space Lens on Child Development

Understanding child development is not about memorising milestones or placing children into rigid categories. It's about cultivating **curiosity, compassion, and realistic expectations**.

At Heart Space Yoga, we approach child development with three guiding principles:

- **Children develop at different rhythms** — there is no “behind” or “ahead.”
- **Behaviour is communication** — especially when children lack the words to express what they're feeling.
- **Regulation comes before learning** — a child who doesn't feel safe cannot focus, listen, or integrate new experiences.

When we hold these principles, child development becomes a support — not a pressure — in our teaching.

“When we understand how children think, feel, and grow, we can meet them where they are, and support them with love and wisdom.”

– Carol Garhart Mooney, *Theories of Childhood* (2013, p. 7)

Yoga can be a meaningful support throughout childhood development, offering different benefits at different stages of the child’s unfolding:

- **Toddlers & Preschoolers (3–5):** Yoga supports body awareness, rhythm, imagination, and early co-regulation.
- **Primary-Age Children (6–8):** It builds social-emotional awareness, cooperative learning, and focus.
- **Tweens & Pre-Teens (9–11):** Yoga nurtures emerging identity, strengthens emotional intelligence, and provides safe self-expression.
- **Teens & Early Adolescents (12–14):** Yoga offers stress relief, emotional grounding, and space for inner reflection during a time of hormonal, cognitive, and social upheaval.

By aligning our teaching methods with the way children learn and grow, we create experiences that are not only enjoyable but deeply regulating and developmentally sound.

Quick Reference: What Children Need Most (By Age)

Use this as a gentle guide — not a rulebook.

- **Ages 3–5:** Rhythm, repetition, imagination, co-regulation, sensory exploration
- **Ages 6–8:** Story + structure, belonging, movement with meaning, peer connection
- **Ages 9–11:** Confidence, emotional language, identity support, purposeful challenge
- **Ages 12–14:** Autonomy, respect, safety from judgement, real tools for stress and self-regulation

If something isn’t working in a class, this list is often the first place to check in.



Developmental Stages & Yoga Focus

Below is a developmental map to guide your class planning and approach for different age groups:

Ages 3–5: The Playful Explorers

- **Cognitive:** Learning through sensory experiences, imitation, and pretend play. Short attention spans (approx. 5–10 minutes max).
- **Emotional:** Rapid mood shifts, big feelings, early self-regulation through co-regulation with adults.
- **Yoga Focus:**
 - Repetition, rhythm, and routine
 - Animal poses, nature stories, puppets, and sound play
 - Songs, chants, and call-and-response
 - Breath as blowing bubbles or blowing out candles
 - Emphasis on *connection*, not *correction*

“Young children feel their emotions first in the body. Yoga helps them express and move through those feelings with safety and curiosity.”

— Radiant Child Yoga Training

Ages 6–8: The Curious Connectors

- **Cognitive:** Logical thinking emerging, still grounded in concrete ideas.
- **Emotional:** Developing emotional vocabulary, increasing empathy, peer connections beginning to form.
- **Yoga Focus:**
 - Themed classes (space, jungle, seasons) with story-driven sequences
 - Partner poses and small group play
 - Simple sun salutations, breathing buddies, and guided imagery
 - Introduction to focus and stillness with movement transitions
 - Encouragement to *notice* body and feelings without pressure

Ages 9–11: The Grounded Explorers

- **Cognitive:** Abstract thinking beginning, greater concentration, growing independence.
- **Emotional:** Self-consciousness may increase, peer group becomes more important.
- **Yoga Focus:**
 - Gentle anatomy and breath awareness
 - Journaling and reflection practices
 - Exploring emotional literacy through yoga themes
 - Empowering strength poses, balance challenges
 - Mindful games that support focus and trust

“Yoga for this age becomes a tool to build emotional vocabulary, celebrate difference, and create spaces of belonging.”

— *Yoga Calm for Children*, Gillen & Gillen

Ages 12–14: The Expanding Selves

- **Cognitive:** Critical thinking, complex problem solving, identity formation.

- **Emotional:** Hormonal fluctuations, increased sensitivity to judgment, desire for autonomy.
- **Yoga Focus:**
 - Language of agency and self-compassion
 - Exploration of values, choices, and self-expression
 - Deeper breath practices, visualisation, journaling
 - Yoga nidra or longer relaxation practices
 - Trauma-informed approach with options, not directives

This is a powerful age to offer yoga not as a performance or fitness practice, but as a *personal tool* for wellbeing and self-discovery.

Developmentally Normal (Not “Naughty”)

Many behaviours that feel challenging in kids yoga are actually **signs of healthy development or nervous system needs**.

Examples include:

- Fidgeting, rocking, rolling, or changing position
- Talking during activities or interrupting
- Testing boundaries or saying “no”
- Watching instead of joining in
- Struggling with stillness or quiet moments
- Big emotional reactions that seem to come “out of nowhere”

Rather than asking, “*How do I stop this behaviour?*”, a developmentally-informed teacher asks:

“What is this child communicating — and what do they need to feel safe right now?”

“When we respect children’s stages of development, we empower them to grow in safety and strength.”

— Maria Montessori

Expectations vs Reality: Supporting Yourself as the Teacher

New kids yoga teachers often place unrealistic expectations on themselves — expecting every class to feel smooth, calm, or “successful.”

Remember:

- A dysregulated class does not mean you failed.
- A child opting out does not mean your teaching didn’t land.
- Connection often matters more than content.

Your role is not to manage every emotion or outcome. It is to offer **consistent presence, attuned support, and developmentally appropriate experiences.**

Practical Activity: Developmental Snapshots

Group Task:

Break into four small groups. Each group will be assigned one age band:

- 3–5
- 6–8
- 9–11
- 12–14

Each group receives a fictional case study describing a child’s typical week, emotional tendencies, interests, and social dynamics.

Discuss:

- What might this child’s physical, social, and emotional needs be?
- What yoga activities might support them?
- What kind of teacher energy would feel safe and engaging?
- How would you adapt language, cues, and expectations?

Present back to the group. This encourages you to begin thinking like a *developmentally-informed* yoga teacher, not just a facilitator of poses.



Reflection & Discussion Prompts

- How does your own childhood experience influence the way you relate to each age group?
- Which developmental stage are you most drawn to working with—and why?
- How does understanding a child's stage of growth support your ability to regulate and guide them without needing to control them?
- Which age group feels most regulating for *you* — and which feels most challenging? When a child struggles to engage, what is your instinctive response — and how might understanding development soften that reaction?

From Understanding to Embodiment

Child development knowledge is most powerful when it lives in your body — not just your head.

As you continue through this training, notice:

- Which age groups you feel naturally at ease with
- Which ones activate uncertainty or self-doubt
- Where your own childhood experiences show up in your teaching

Awareness of *your* patterns helps you remain grounded, responsive, and compassionate — especially on the harder days.

Suggested Reading Quotes

“When we offer yoga in a way that honours the whole child—body, mind, emotion, and spirit—we aren’t just teaching poses. We are creating pathways for healing, connection, and expression.”

— Lisa Flynn, *Yoga for Children*, p. 12

“A child’s nervous system is shaped through repetition, relationship, and rhythm. Yoga becomes a way to embed safety into their sensory experience.”

– Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Body-Mind Centering

Understanding child development gives us the *why* — teaching methodology shows us the *how*. In the next section, we explore how to translate this knowledge into playful, responsive, and heart-centred teaching practices.



3. Teaching Methodology

Teaching yoga to children is a dynamic, playful, and deeply relational process. It's not about alignment, aesthetic, or quietude—it's about connection, co-regulation, and curiosity. While adults often come to the mat seeking silence and stillness, children arrive with an innate need to move, play, vocalise, and connect. Our job is to meet them there—with presence, structure, creativity, and compassion.

Teaching the Heart Space Way

Heart Space kids yoga is guided by the understanding that **how we teach matters as much as what we teach**. Methodology isn't about having the perfect plan — it's about being able to respond skillfully, warmly, and intuitively to the children in front of you.

At Heart Space Yoga, our teaching methodology rests on six pillars:

- **Relationship first** — connection creates safety; safety creates learning
- **Structure with softness** — rhythm and routine without rigidity
- **Play as a regulating force** — laughter and imagination settle the nervous system
- **Choice and agency** — invitations instead of instructions
- **Embodiment over explanation** — children learn by doing and feeling
- **Attunement over agenda** — we adjust based on what we see and sense

When these pillars are in place, even the most lively class can feel grounded and supportive.

“We don’t teach at children—we teach with them. The best classes feel like co-creation, where imagination and structure dance together.”

– Lisa Flynn, *Yoga for Children* (2013, p. 13)

Your Role as Teacher: Beyond Instruction

You are not just a yoga instructor—you’re a:

- **Space holder** – creating a safe and supportive container
- **Play leader** – inviting joy, spontaneity, and freedom
- **Storyteller** – weaving narrative through movement and breath
- **Co-regulator** – grounding emotional energy in the room
- **Ritual guide** – offering rhythm and predictability
- **Mirror** – reflecting children’s strengths, ideas, and growth

This methodology calls for **presence over perfection** and **relationship over results**.

Elements of a Strong Kids Yoga Class

Most classes will follow a loose arc that provides consistency while allowing creative freedom. A typical structure includes:

1. Opening Circle

- Name games, sharing sticks, check-ins
- Set intention or introduce the theme (e.g., bravery, jungle animals)

2. Warm-Up

- Silly wiggles, sun dances, breath games, music-based movement
- Prepares body and nervous system for learning

3. Main Sequence

- Themed yoga poses (e.g., a journey through the forest)
- Introduced through story, song, or visual imagery
- Adapted for the age group’s developmental stage

4. Partner or Group Pose

- Builds trust, communication, and social-emotional skills
- Encourages cooperation and joy

5. Breath & Mindfulness

- Tools to regulate and connect inward (e.g., balloon breath, breathing buddies, feather focus)
- Supports emotional literacy and nervous system regulation

6. Relaxation or Guided Story

- Restorative pose with visualisation, story, or affirmation
- Calms the body and seals the class experience

7. Closing Ritual

- Gratitude circle, mantra, goodbye song, or affirmation
- Establishes emotional safety and transition readiness

“Ritual creates rhythm. Rhythm creates trust. Trust creates transformation.”

– Kim John Payne, *Simplicity Parenting* (2009)

Your Creative Teaching Toolkit (Build Once, Use Forever)

Rather than planning from scratch each week, experienced kids yoga teachers build a *toolkit* they can draw from again and again.

Here are some foundational tools to start collecting:

Story Starters

- “Today we’re going on a journey...”
- “Once upon a time, there was a brave little...”
- “Imagine you’ve just stepped into a magical forest...”

Transition Tools

- A familiar song for moving between activities
- A chime or bell to signal a shift
- Call-and-response phrases (“When I say calm, you say breath...”)

Regulation Resets

- Breathing buddy break
- Wall push or star jumps x5
- Hand-on-heart breath together
- “Shake it out, then melt”

Opening Circle Prompts

- “How does your body feel today?”
- “If your mood had a colour, what would it be?”
- “Show me with your hands how big your energy feels.”

Closing Rituals

- Group affirmation
- Goodbye song
- Gratitude share
- Gentle bow or heart hands

Having these tools ready allows you to stay calm, flexible, and creative — even when a class takes an unexpected turn.

Trauma-Informed Teaching

Many children today carry hidden stress or trauma in their bodies. A trauma-informed yoga teacher prioritises:

- **Choice over compliance** – offering options (e.g., “Would you like to lie down or sit up for relaxation?”)
- **Consent over correction** – no forced poses or adjustments
- **Connection over control** – seeing behaviour as communication
- **Co-regulation over punishment** – staying calm and attuned

“Children do well when they can, not when they want to.”

– Ross Greene, *The Explosive Child*

Choice-Based Language in Action

Below are examples of how small shifts in language can radically change how safe a class feels.

Instead of:

- “Everyone sit still.”

Try:

- “Find a way to sit that helps your body feel steady.”

Instead of:

- “Eyes closed.”

Try:

- “Eyes closed, or softly looking at the floor — you choose.”

Instead of:

- “Stop doing that.”

Try:

- “Let’s find something your body can do that feels a bit calmer.”

These small shifts honour autonomy and support self-regulation — especially for neurodivergent children.

Teaching Tools: Voice, Props, Stories & Energy

Voice & Language

- Use warm, animated tone for young children; grounded and clear tone for older ones
- Use metaphor-based, sensory-rich cues (e.g., “Grow tall like a sunflower”)
- Focus on *invitation language*: “Let’s try...”, “Can you imagine...?”, “What might it feel like to...?”

Body Language

- Be on their level physically—kneeling, crouching, lying down
- Use mirroring, eye contact, and calm gestures to co-regulate
- Model poses, but don’t dominate space—leave room for their creativity

Props & Visual Aids

- Feathers, scarves, yoga cards, calming jars, musical instruments, puppets
- Visual schedule boards for predictability—especially important for neurodivergent children

- Affirmation stones or mindfulness dice to spark reflection

Themes & Stories

Children thrive when there's a *story to follow*. Use:

- Nature cycles (e.g., seasons, weather, moon)
- Emotional themes (e.g., resilience, gratitude, bravery)
- Book-inspired journeys (e.g., *The Colour Monster*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*)
- Create original yoga stories with the children's input!

Music & Sound

- Use songs to guide transitions ("Time to roll our mats up like burritos!")
- Introduce gentle mantra-based songs or affirmations (e.g., "Peace begins with me")
- Rhythm sticks, chime bowls, rain sticks, and ukuleles are all welcome!

Flexibility & Flow

Even the best-planned class will occasionally unravel. Your greatest tool is *attunement*. Are the children dysregulated? Overstimulated? Underwhelmed? Your ability to **observe, adapt, and regulate yourself** sets the tone.

Tips:

- Always have 2–3 backup activities
- Create "reset" moments (e.g., breathing buddy break, listening jar, short story)
- Let go of the plan if needed—follow their energy while gently guiding it
- Practice your own regulation tools before and after class

"Children learn best in relationships that feel emotionally safe. You become the regulation they borrow until they can self-regulate."

– Becky Kennedy, *Good Inside*



The Teacher's Nervous System: Your Most Important Teaching Tool

Children unconsciously attune to the nervous system of the adult in the room. This means **your regulation leads before any technique does.**

Before class:

- Arrive early if possible
- Take three slow breaths with long exhales
- Feel your feet on the floor
- Set a simple intention: *presence over perfection*

During class:

- Slow your voice if the room feels loud
- Soften your shoulders and jaw
- Model calm rather than requesting it
- Breathe visibly and audibly when needed

After class:

- Shake out your body
- Drink water
- Take a moment to “close” the session energetically
- Reflect briefly: *What supported regulation today?*

You are not meant to hold everything. Regulation is a shared process.

Adapting in Real Time: One Plan, Three Possibilities

Even with a solid plan, every class arrives with its own energy. Practise asking yourself:

- **If the group feels anxious or low energy:**
Fewer poses, more repetition, longer relaxation
- **If the group feels dysregulated or high energy:**
More rhythm, animal walks, short bursts of movement, brief stillness
- **If the group has mixed needs:**
Offer stations, choices, observing without pressure, and flexible pacing

Adaptation is not failure — it is skilled teaching.



Practice Activity: Create a 15-Minute Class

In small groups:

1. Choose a theme (e.g., jungle adventure, the colour red, kindness).
2. Select an age group (3–5, 6–8, 9–11).
3. Build a class arc with:
 - Opening circle/check-in
 - 3–5 poses linked to theme

- Breath or mindfulness tool
- Closing ritual

Teach the mini-class to a partner or group. Offer supportive feedback on:

- Clarity of cues and structure
- Age-appropriateness of energy and theme
- Opportunities for play, imagination, and rest



Reflection & Discussion Prompts

- What qualities do you admire in a facilitator or guide?
- How might your own inner child show up in your teaching style?
- What does “teaching with children” (rather than *at* them) mean to you?
- What strengths do you already bring into a kids yoga space?
- How will you create inclusive spaces where every child feels seen and safe?
- How do you usually respond when a class doesn’t go to plan?
- What helps *you* stay regulated when the energy in the room is high?

Reading Quotes

“Teaching yoga to children is not about downward dogs and warrior poses—it’s about empowering them to connect with their breath, notice their emotions, and find joy in their bodies.”

– Lisa Flynn, *Yoga for Children* (p. 32)

“Children mirror the nervous system of the adult in the room. When you’re calm, they borrow your calm. When you’re present, they settle into that presence.”

– Mona Delahooke, *Beyond Behaviors*

“The best teachers are playful enough to be trusted, and grounded enough to hold the energy of the room.”

– Kira Willey, *Breathe Like a Bear*

Now that we’ve explored how to structure and adapt kids yoga classes, we turn our attention inward — to breathwork and mindfulness, the tools that support emotional regulation from the inside out.



4. Breathwork & Mindfulness for Kids

Teaching breathwork and mindfulness to children is one of the most powerful and lasting gifts we can offer. These practices are not about “making children calm”—they are about helping them feel **connected, seen, and safe** in their bodies and experiences. When introduced with care, creativity, and developmental awareness, breathwork and mindfulness become lifelong anchors of resilience, emotional literacy, and self-trust.

Breathwork Through a Nervous System Lens

In children, breathwork is not about control or correction — it is about **sending safety signals to the body**.

The nervous system responds far more to *how* a practice feels than to instructions. When breathwork is playful, rhythmic, and choice-based, it helps children shift gently from states of overwhelm or hyperarousal into greater steadiness and connection.

A few simple principles to remember:

- **Longer exhales** — tend to support calming and settling
- **Shorter, playful breaths** — can help wake up low energy
- **Rhythm creates safety** — counting, music, and repetition help regulate
- **Modelling matters** — children breathe with you, not because of you

Breath is not a fix for emotions. It is a support while emotions move through the body.

“When a child learns to follow their breath, they learn to follow themselves. This is the foundation of inner awareness.”

– Susan Kaiser Greenland, *The Mindful Child* (2010, p. 22)



Breathwork: Making the Invisible Visible

Young children often find breathwork too abstract without visual, sensory, or imaginative support. As kids' yoga teachers, we use **props, play, and rhythm** to help them experience breath in a way that feels real and joyful.

Core Breath Practices

Practice	Description	Best For
Belly Buddies	Lying down with a soft toy on the belly to watch it rise and fall.	Ages 3–9
Feather Breathing	Blow a feather slowly across a surface, focusing on the length of exhale.	All ages
Bubble Breath	Pretend to blow bubbles slowly. Great for lengthening the out-breath.	Ages 4–10
Snake Hiss	Inhale deeply, then exhale with a long “sssssssss.”	Ages 5+

Practice	Description	Best For
Bunny Breaths	Three short sniffs in through the nose, one long exhale.	Energising ages 3–7
Breathing Buddies	A breathing teddy that joins the class to teach new breaths (with a voice!)	Ages 3–8

“The way we breathe is the way we live. Teach children to breathe well, and you teach them to live well.”

– Sonia Sumar, *Yoga for the Special Child* (2007, p. 65)

Breathwork Tips

- Children may giggle, fidget, or resist—this is normal!
- Don’t insist on silence—encourage noticing over control.
- Reinforce **"breath as a superpower"**: a tool they can take anywhere.



Breathwork Is Not Behaviour Management

It’s tempting to reach for breathing exercises when children are loud, excited, or unsettled. While breathwork *can* support regulation, it should never be used to silence, suppress, or control emotional expression.

Instead of saying:

- “Calm down.”

- “Take a breath.”

Try:

- “Let’s breathe together for a moment.”
- “Your body looks like it has lots of energy — shall we try a strong breath or a slow one?”
- “Breath can help your body feel a bit safer right now.”

When breath is offered as a tool rather than a command, children are more likely to trust it — and use it independently over time.

Mindfulness: Noticing the Now

Mindfulness is not about stillness or perfection—it’s about **noticing**. With children, we teach mindfulness through **sensory engagement**, **curiosity**, and **connection** rather than rigid focus.

Ways to Practise Mindfulness with Kids

- **Mindful Listening:** Ring a bell or chime; children raise their hand when sound stops.
- **Gratitude Circle:** Pass a soft object; each child shares one thing they’re grateful for.
- **Mindful Seeing:** Choose a colour or shape and go on a visual scavenger hunt.
- **Mindful Touch:** Explore nature items or textures (e.g., soft, rough, smooth) with eyes closed.
- **Mindful Eating:** Use a raisin or strawberry—pause and explore with every sense.

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.”

— Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Wherever You Go, There You Are* (1994)

When Stillness Feels Hard: Mindfulness With Movement

For many children — especially those who are neurodivergent or carrying stress — traditional stillness-based mindfulness can feel uncomfortable or even dysregulating.

Movement-based mindfulness allows awareness to grow *through* motion.

Examples include:

- Tracing the breath with fingers or hands
- Walking slowly while matching steps to breath

- Rocking gently in Child's Pose
- Pressing hands into the wall while breathing
- Rolling a ball back and forth in time with the breath

Mindfulness is about noticing — not stopping — movement.



Creative Extensions

- Use **mindfulness jars** with glitter, water, and food colouring to represent thoughts settling.
- Incorporate **yoga storybooks** that include reflection moments (e.g., *Breathe Like a Bear* by Kira Willey).
- Allow movement-based mindfulness for fidgety or neurodivergent children (e.g., walking meditation, hand-tracing breaths).

The Power of Rhythm

Rhythm regulates the nervous system. For children—especially those with sensory integration differences, trauma backgrounds, or ADHD—**rhythm is grounding, predictable, and safe.**

Ways to Use Rhythm:

- **Breath Counting with Beats:** Tap drum or clap 1-2-3-4 on inhale, then 1-2-3-4-5-6 on exhale.

- **Mantra + Movement:** Pair “Peace begins with me” with finger taps.
- **Walking Rhythms:** March in a circle while breathing to a beat.
- **Singing Bowl Flow:** Use a Tibetan bowl to start and end transitions.



“The body needs rhythm to feel safe. The breath needs rhythm to feel steady. Children need rhythm to feel held.”

– Inspired by Dr. Bruce Perry

Rhythm as Regulation

Rhythm supports the nervous system by offering predictability, containment, and flow. For children who struggle with transitions, attention, or sensory processing, rhythm can be deeply organising.

You might notice that:

- Clapping, drumming, or chanting helps children stay engaged
- Songs support smoother transitions between activities
- Repetitive rhythms calm anxious or overwhelmed children

When in doubt, return to rhythm. It is one of the most accessible regulation tools we have.

Trauma-Aware & Neuro-Affirming Mindfulness

Children who've experienced trauma or who are neurodivergent may find mindfulness difficult or dysregulating at first. Avoid phrases like “calm down” or “clear your mind,” and instead:

- Focus on **sensory awareness**: “Can you feel your toes inside your socks?”
- Use **co-regulation**: model breath, sit close, mirror emotion
- Provide **choice**: “Would you like to sit or lie down for our quiet moment?”
- Keep mindfulness moments **short and layered**—think *drops of stillness*, not long meditations.

Offering Choice Builds Safety

Choice is one of the most powerful trauma-aware tools in kids yoga.

When offering breath or mindfulness practices:

- Always offer at least two options (e.g. sitting or lying down)
- Let children keep eyes open if they prefer
- Allow observing instead of participating
- Normalise movement, fidgeting, or rest

Choice does not reduce the effectiveness of mindfulness — it increases it.



Activity: Create a Mindfulness Moment

In groups or pairs:

- Choose an age group (3–5, 6–8, 9–11, 12–14)
- Design a 5-minute practice including:
 - A **prop** (feather, bell, texture object, visual cue)
 - A **metaphor or image** (“Let your thoughts float like clouds...”)
 - A **closing ritual or phrase** (“Thank you, breath. Thank you, body.”)

After sharing your mini-practice:

- What worked well?
- How did your own body respond?
- What would you change for a child who needs more movement?

Adapting Mindfulness for Different Nervous System States

After sharing your mini-practice, reflect together:

- How would this practice change for a highly energised group?
- How would it change for an anxious or withdrawn group?
- How might a neurodivergent child experience this practice?
- What choices could you offer to support different needs?



Reflection & Discussion Prompts

- Which of these practices might have helped your younger self feel safer or more resourced?
- When do you feel most present in your own life? What helps you get there?

- How can you teach breath and mindfulness without using it as a behaviour management tool?
 - What would it look like to hold space for ALL emotions—not just peaceful ones?
 - How do you personally respond to breath and mindfulness when you're overwhelmed?
 - What helps you remember that regulation comes before stillness?
-

Additional Reading & Resources

- *The Mindful Child* by Susan Kaiser Greenland
 - *Sitting Still Like a Frog* by Eline Snel
 - *Good Inside* by Dr. Becky Kennedy
 - *The Whole-Brain Child* by Daniel Siegel & Tina Payne Bryson
 - *Yoga for Children* by Lisa Flynn
-

As we deepen our understanding of breath and mindfulness, it becomes clear that children experience regulation in many different ways. In the next section, we explore how to create inclusive, neurodivergent-friendly yoga spaces that honour these differences with care and compassion.



5. Inclusive & Neurodivergent-Friendly Yoga

Creating spaces where every child feels seen, safe, and celebrated

Yoga is for **every** child. Not just those who can sit still. Not just those who love group activities. Not just those who process the world in ways we've been taught to expect.

Children who are neurodivergent—those with autism, ADHD, sensory differences, learning disabilities, trauma adaptations, or unique emotional landscapes—**belong in our yoga spaces just as they are**. Inclusion isn't an add-on. It's the foundation.

Inclusion Is a Practice, Not a Perfection

Inclusive teaching does not mean getting everything “right” all the time. It means staying curious, responsive, and compassionate — especially when things feel messy or unfamiliar.

At Heart Space Yoga, inclusion is rooted in:

- **Listening over labelling**

- Flexibility over fixed expectations
- Relationship over rules
- Curiosity over correction

You do not need to be an expert in every diagnosis or difference. You need to be willing to adapt, reflect, and keep the child's felt sense of safety at the centre of your teaching.

"When children are given the freedom to be who they are, they often blossom in ways we never imagined."

– Temple Grandin



What Does Neurodivergence Mean?

Neurodivergence refers to the natural variation in how human brains are wired and how they experience and interact with the world. It challenges the idea that there's one 'right' or 'normal' way to think, feel, move, or learn.

Examples include:

- Autism / Autistic Spectrum
- ADHD
- Sensory Processing Disorder
- Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia
- Tourette's

- OCD
- Learning disabilities
- Anxiety, trauma responses

These children may:

- Experience **heightened or reduced sensitivity** to light, sound, touch, movement
- Struggle with **transitions or unpredictability**
- Show **incredible strengths** in focus, memory, creativity, empathy
- Have challenges with **attention, executive function**, or emotional regulation

“The goal is not to change the child, but to offer an environment in which they can feel safe and flourish.”

– Mona Delahooke, *Beyond Behaviors*



Sensory Processing: What You Might Notice in Class

Many neurodivergent children experience the world through heightened or reduced sensory input. These sensory needs often show up through behaviour.

You might notice:

- **Sound sensitivity:** covering ears, distress during music or chanting
- **Touch sensitivity:** avoiding mats, props, or group contact
- **Movement seeking:** rocking, spinning, running, crashing
- **Proprioceptive needs:** pushing, squeezing, lying on the floor

- **Visual overwhelm:** difficulty with bright lights or busy rooms
- **Transition challenges:** distress when activities change unexpectedly

These responses are not misbehaviour — they are communication.

A helpful question to return to is:

“What sensory need might this behaviour be expressing?”

Principles of Heart-Centred Inclusion

1. Safety over Stillness

Allow movement. Allow stimming. Allow silence. Stillness isn't the goal—**felt safety** is. If a child feels safe, connection and regulation will follow.

2. Structure + Choice

Predictability helps children feel grounded. Use consistent class rhythms and visual timetables. But within that rhythm, always offer choices—*“Would you like to do Down Dog or Cat Stretch today?”*

3. Predictability + Play

Keep transitions consistent (songs, visuals, routines), but let the content be creative. Familiarity builds confidence; imagination builds engagement.

4. Language That Builds Trust

Avoid shame-based instructions like:

- ✗ “Use your listening ears!”
- ✗ “You need to be calm now.”

Instead try:

- ✓ “Let’s take a soft breath together.”
- ✓ “You can join in when your body feels ready.”
- ✓ “Would you like to try it your way?”

5. Multi-Sensory Invitations

Incorporate:

- **Touch:** textured scarves, weighted toys
- **Visuals:** cards, storyboards, pose charts

- **Sound:** soft music, bells, chants
- **Movement:** rocking, spinning, crawling
Offer sensory tools: fidget toys, ear defenders, soft blankets, wobble cushions, or corners to decompress.

6. Co-Regulation Over Control

Your presence is the anchor. Your calm tone, gentle breathing, grounded posture—**this is the most powerful teaching tool**. Model regulation before you request it.

“We cannot help a child regulate unless we ourselves are regulated.”

– Dr. Stuart Shanker

Practical Strategies for Inclusion

- Use a **visual timetable** so children know what’s coming next.
- Offer **“First... Then...”** language: “First we stretch, then you choose your pose.”
- Use **transition cues** like songs, bells, or call-and-response chants.
- Allow **movement breaks**, stimming, or observing without pressure.
- Build in **regulation zones**—soft corner with ear defenders, weighted blanket, or sensory bottles.
- Keep **language clear and concrete**: Instead of “be mindful,” say “breathe like a balloon,” or “let’s stretch our arms up to the sky.”

Sensory-Friendly Class Setup Checklist

Before class begins, ask yourself:

- Is the class rhythm predictable (opening, movement, breath, rest)?
- Is there a visual schedule or “now / next” cue available?
- Is volume kept gentle and adjustable?
- Is there a calm space or option to step back if needed?
- Are props optional rather than compulsory?
- Is choice built into instructions and transitions?

Small environmental shifts can dramatically increase a child’s sense of safety and belonging.

Reframing Behaviours with Compassion

Behaviour You See	What It Might Mean
Not joining in	Needs more time to feel safe or may be observing
Talking loudly or interrupting	Regulating with sound / high energy expression
Running or fidgeting	Seeking sensory input to stay regulated
Lying down instead of sitting	Needs grounding / fatigue / sensory overload
Saying “no” often	Asserting autonomy, seeking control or safety

Always ask: What does this child need to feel safe *right now*?

From Behaviour Management to Nervous System Support

Traditional behaviour management focuses on control, compliance, and correction. Inclusive kids yoga focuses instead on **regulation, relationship, and support**.

When a child is struggling:

- Lower demands before raising expectations
- Regulate yourself first
- Reduce stimulation if possible
- Offer a grounding or sensory option
- Acknowledge the feeling without judgement

Sometimes the most supportive action is simply staying close, calm, and available.

Activity: Inclusive Class Plan Redesign

Step 1: Choose one of your existing 10–15 minute class outlines.

Step 2: Redesign it with inclusive principles in mind:

- Swap out metaphor-heavy cues for concrete visual demonstrations
- Add a soft transition song

- Include a movement break or sensory pause
- Add a choice-based pose moment
- Write a script using affirming language

Step 3: Share with a partner or the group. Reflect:

- What small shift had the biggest impact?
 - What did you realise about your default teaching style?
 - How would this feel for a child who processes the world differently?
-

Co-Regulation Starts With You

Children do not regulate *because* of instructions — they regulate *through connection*.

Notice:

- Your tone of voice
- Your pace of speech
- Your body language
- Your breath

If a child feels unsettled, start by gently settling *yourself*. This is not about doing more — it's about *being* more present.



Co-Regulation Circle Practice

Try this gentle practice together:

1. **Hoberman Breath:** Use an expanding ball and match breath with the visual rhythm.
2. **Mirror Movement:** One person leads small hand/arm movements while others mirror silently.
3. **Guided Body Awareness:** Invite participants to choose: “Hand on heart, belly, or resting at your sides—where does your breath feel most welcome today?”

These build synchrony, connection, and safety through **shared nervous system experiences**.



Reflection & Discussion Prompts

- What **behavioural expectations** from school or society do I unconsciously carry into my teaching?
 - What does **true inclusion** feel like in *my own body*?
 - How do I hold **space for autonomy** in my classes?
 - Which behaviours do you personally find most challenging — and what might they be communicating?
 - How does offering choice change the energy in your body as a teacher?
-

Final Thoughts

Inclusion is not a “nice-to-have”—it’s how we build a world where every child knows they matter.

Let your yoga class be the place where:

- No one is too loud.
- No one is too fidgety.
- No one is “behind” or “difficult.”

- Everyone is welcome.

“If a child can’t learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.”

– Ignacio Estrada

When we design classes with inclusion at the foundation, lesson planning becomes less about “getting through content” and more about creating experiences that can flex and respond to real children in real bodies. In the next section, we explore how to bring this into practical, adaptable lesson planning.



6. Practical Lesson Plans

Creating meaningful, magical, and mindful yoga journeys for every age

A well-designed kids' yoga class is never just a series of poses—it's a *journey*. A blend of rhythm and freedom. Structure and play. Grounding and imagination. Whether you're working with three-year-olds or teens, the aim is always the same: to meet them where they are and guide them gently towards connection—with their breath, their body, their feelings, and one another.

This section will support you to:

- Understand key developmental stages for different age groups
- Plan creative, themed classes that flow with ease
- Adapt your teaching to match the energy, setting, or needs of the group
- Build your confidence in weaving together movement, mindfulness, play, and rest

You'll find detailed theme templates, adaptable formats, and inspiration to help you shine in the class setting.

Planning With Presence, Not Perfection

A lesson plan is not a script — it's a **container**. It gives you enough structure to feel safe, while leaving space for the children to shape the experience.

At Heart Space Yoga, we plan with three intentions in mind:

- **Support regulation** before learning or focus
- **Offer choice** within a predictable rhythm
- **Adapt to the group in front of us**, not the plan on the page

If a class doesn't follow your plan exactly, that doesn't mean the class wasn't successful. Often, the most meaningful moments happen when we let go of "doing it right."

Class Flow Structure: The Heart Space Rhythm

While every group is different, a simple, familiar rhythm can create a sense of safety and trust. This is the flexible template we return to:

1. **Opening Circle & Check-In** – Ground the group, build connection
2. **Warm-Up (Movement & Song)** – Activate the body, set the tone
3. **Main Yoga Sequence** – Themed poses, stories, or creative flow
4. **Group or Partner Pose** – Encourage teamwork and shared joy
5. **Breath & Mindfulness Moment** – Build inner awareness
6. **Relaxation/Story Visualisation** – Deep rest and integration
7. **Closing Ritual** – Circle, mantra, song, or reflection

You can expand, shorten, or repeat parts based on:

- Time available
- Group energy and focus
- Indoor vs outdoor settings
- Age, attention span, or additional needs

One Class, Three Ways: Your Adaptation Cheat Sheet

The same lesson can meet very different needs depending on the group's energy and nervous systems.

If the group feels anxious, withdrawn, or tired:

- Fewer poses, more repetition
- Softer music or no music
- Longer relaxation or visualisation
- Slower transitions and grounding breath

If the group feels over-excited or dysregulated:

- More rhythm and animal movement
- Short bursts of activity with clear start/stop cues
- Call-and-response games
- Very brief drops of stillness

If the group has mixed needs:

- Offer stations or options
- Let children observe before joining
- Build in movement breaks
- Use visual cues alongside verbal instructions

Adaptation is skilled teaching — not a lack of preparation.

Planning Through a Nervous System Lens

When planning, ask yourself:

- Where are children most likely to feel regulated?
- Where might transitions be challenging?
- Where can rhythm, repetition, or choice help?

You might intentionally plan:

- A regulating opening (predictable song or breath)
- A high-energy release early on
- A grounding moment mid-class

- A clear, calm closing ritual

This nervous system awareness turns a good plan into a supportive one.



Most Used Kids Yoga Poses

A playful and practical guide for class planning

Kids yoga is not about achieving perfect shapes. It is about helping children feel **safe in their bodies, confident in themselves, and able to understand and regulate their inner world.**

In children's yoga, poses are tools for **connection, regulation, creativity, and expression**, not positions to be corrected or perfected. Each pose supports multiple aspects of a child's development, including physical coordination and strength, emotional awareness, imagination, and nervous system balance.

The benefits in this section are written in **simple, child-friendly language**, allowing teachers to easily translate them into cues, stories, games, songs, and moments of reflection. Trainees are encouraged to return to this guide again and again when planning classes, adapting poses to suit different ages, energy levels, abilities, and the unique needs of the children in front of them.

Foundational / Grounding Poses

These poses help children settle into their bodies, feel safe, and connect to the floor.

Grounding poses are especially important at the beginning of class, during transitions, or whenever children feel overwhelmed. They support emotional safety, predictability, and a sense of calm

Easy Pose (Sukhasana)



Benefits:

- Encourages calm sitting and body awareness
- Supports gentle breathing and focus
- Creates a sense of safety and readiness
- Ideal for story time, songs, check-ins, and opening rituals

Easy Pose helps children arrive in their bodies and in the space. It is often used to gather the group and create a shared sense of connection.

Child's Pose (Balasana)



Benefits:

- Offers comfort, rest, and emotional safety
- Gently stretches the back and hips
- Encourages self-soothing and quiet moments
- Helps children learn that it is okay to pause and rest

Child's Pose is one of the most important shapes in kids yoga. It provides a built-in option for rest and reinforces the message that listening to your body is always welcome.

Cat & Cow (Marjaryasana / Bitilasana)



Benefits:

- Improves spinal mobility and posture awareness
- Helps children link breath with movement
- Releases tension through playful motion
- Encourages expression through sounds and imagination

Cat and Cow introduce rhythm and flow in a simple, accessible way, helping children feel confident moving their spine.

Animal-Inspired Poses

Perfect for themed classes, storytelling, and imaginative play.

Animal poses invite children to step into character, making yoga playful and relatable while supporting strength, flexibility, and emotional expression.

Downward Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana)



Benefits:

- Strengthens arms, legs, and shoulders
- Stretches the whole body in one pose
- Boosts energy and circulation
- Builds confidence through strong, playful movement

Often transformed into dogs, bears, or mountains, this pose offers a full-body experience while remaining fun and accessible.

Cobra (Bhujangasana)



Benefits:

- Strengthens the back and opens the chest
- Encourages proud posture and confidence
- Helps children feel brave and expressive
- Supports healthy spine development

Cobra is often linked to themes of courage, self-expression, and confidence.

Butterfly Pose (Baddha Konasana)



Benefits:

- Gently opens hips and inner thighs
- Encourages stillness combined with gentle movement
- Supports emotional regulation
- Helps children slow down and tune inward

Butterfly can be energising or calming, making it a versatile pose for transitions.

Lion's Breath (Simhasana variation)



Benefits:

- Releases tension and bottled-up emotions
- Encourages emotional expression in a safe way
- Builds confidence and voice awareness
- Helps shy children feel empowered

This is especially helpful for children who struggle to express big feelings.

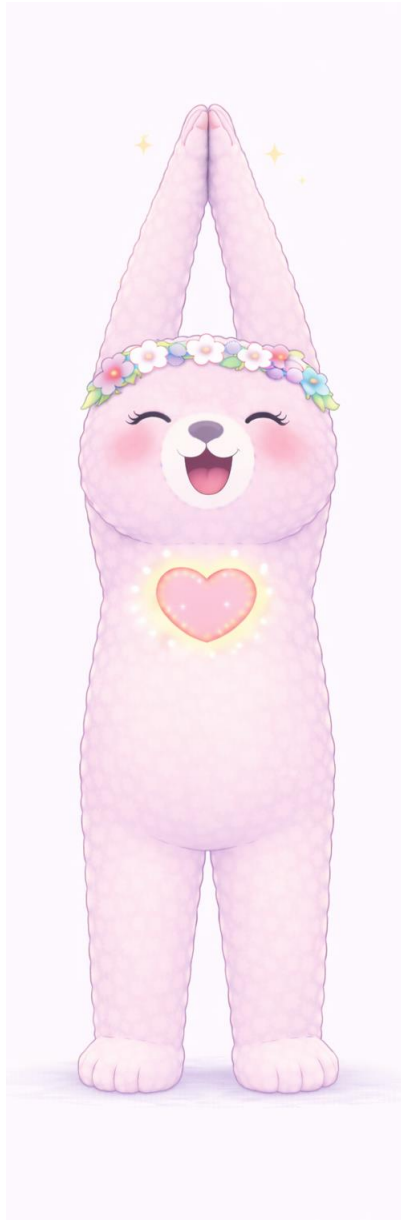
Frog Pose (Malasana)



Benefits:

- Strengthens legs and hips
 - Improves balance and coordination
 - Encourages grounding and playfulness
 - Supports natural squatting patterns
-

Giraffe Neck Stretch



Benefits:

- Encourages tall posture and body awareness
 - Gently stretches the neck and shoulders
 - Helps children feel spacious and confident
 - Supports coordination and mindful movement
-

Balancing Poses

Develop focus, stability, patience, and confidence through playful challenge.

Balancing poses teach children how to wobble, fall, try again, and succeed.

Tree Pose (Vrksasana)



Benefits:

- Improves balance and coordination
 - Builds concentration and patience
 - Encourages confidence and stillness
 - Teaches children how to wobble without giving up
-

Flamingo Pose



Benefits:

- Strengthens legs and ankles
- Improves balance and spatial awareness
- Encourages play and laughter
- Builds confidence through challenge

Airplane (Warrior III variation)



Benefits:

- Strengthens core and back muscles
 - Improves focus and body control
 - Builds resilience and determination
 - Encourages imagination and creative play
-

Strengthening & Energising Poses

Boost resilience, coordination, and self-esteem.

These poses help children experience effort positively and build trust in their bodies.

Warrior I & II (Virabhadrasana I & II)



Benefits:

- Build leg and core strength
 - Improve stamina and focus
 - Encourage bravery, confidence, and self-belief
 - Support emotional empowerment
-

Chair Pose (Utkatasana)



Benefits:

- Strengthens legs and core
 - Builds determination and resilience
 - Encourages playful effort and teamwork
 - Helps children feel powerful in their bodies
-

Plank Pose



Benefits:

- Builds full-body strength
 - Improves posture and core stability
 - Encourages confidence and perseverance
 - Teaches healthy effort balanced with rest
-

Tabletop Pose



Benefits:

- Builds shoulder and core strength
 - Encourages coordination and crawling patterns
 - Supports imaginative play
 - Helps children feel stable and grounded
-

Calming & Restorative Poses

Support emotional regulation, integration, and rest.

These poses help children wind down, especially after active play or emotionally charged themes.

Seated Forward Fold (Paschimottanasana)



Benefits:

- Gently stretches the back and legs
 - Encourages calm and introspection
 - Helps slow breathing
 - Supports emotional settling
-

Happy Baby (Ananda Balasana)



Benefits:

- Releases tension in hips and lower back
 - Encourages playfulness and joy
 - Supports self-soothing
 - Helps children feel relaxed and safe
-

Legs Up the Wall (Viparita Karani)



Benefits:

- Calms the nervous system
- Reduces restlessness and overstimulation
- Encourages deep relaxation
- Supports transitions to rest

Savasana/ Starfish



Benefits:

- Allows body and mind to fully rest
 - Helps integrate the practice
 - Encourages imagination and visualisation
 - Teaches the importance of stillness and rest
-

Transitional & Flow Poses

Support rhythm, repetition, sequencing, and smooth transitions.

Mountain Pose (Tadasana)



Benefits:

- Encourages grounding and body awareness
- Supports posture and balance
- Helps children reset and refocus
- Ideal for intention setting and breathwork

Volcano Pose



Benefits:

- Releases energy in a safe, playful way
 - Encourages expression and confidence
 - Helps regulate big emotions
 - Builds coordination and joy
-

Adapted Sun Salutations

Benefits:

- Improve coordination and memory
 - Encourage rhythm and flow
 - Build strength, flexibility, and focus
 - Create a joyful sense of routine
-

Age-Sensitive & Adaptive Teaching

Kids yoga should always be responsive to age, stage, and individual needs.

- **Ages 3–5:** keep poses low, playful, short, and story-based
 - **Ages 6–8:** introduce balance, strength, and emotional language
 - **Ages 9–11:** offer choice, reflection, autonomy, and longer holds
-

Emotional & Nervous System Support

Yoga poses can be chosen based on **how children feel**, not just how they move.

- **For anxiety or overwhelm:** Child's Pose, Butterfly, Forward Fold, Legs Up the Wall
 - **For anger or restlessness:** Lion's Breath, Volcano, Warriors, Chair
 - **For low confidence:** Tree, Warrior, Cobra, Mountain
 - **For overstimulation or fatigue:** Happy Baby, Butterfly, Starfish
-

Class Theme Mapping

These poses work beautifully within themed classes such as:

- **Animals & Nature**
 - **Emotions & Feelings**
 - **Superheroes & Strength**
 - **Calm & Bedtime Yoga**
-

Inclusive & Neurodivergent-Friendly Approach

Kids yoga should always be **choice-led and adaptable**.

Support inclusion by:

- Offering options, not corrections
- Allowing children to watch instead of join
- Avoiding pressure to lie still or be quiet
- Using predictable routines and visual imagery
- Welcoming movement during rest

A child regulating themselves is succeeding — even if it looks different from the plan.

Key Teaching Reminder

In kids yoga:

- **Joy matters more than precision**
 - **Safety matters more than stillness**
 - **Connection matters more than control**
-

Themed Class Templates by Age

Ages 3–5: The Playful Explorers



Children in this age group thrive on **repetition, rhythm, music, movement, and imaginative play**. Attention spans are short, so keep sessions around 25–30 minutes with smooth transitions and lots of visual support.

Your goals:

- Build confidence through routine
- Use imaginative storytelling
- Engage through sensory and physical play

Sample Themes:

- Jungle Adventure
- Weather Wonders
- Animal Friends
- Rainbow Colours
- Outer Space
- My Feelings
- Under the Sea
- Garden Growing
- Magical Creatures
- Winter Cosies

Jungle Adventure (Example Plan):

- **Opening Circle:** “What animal are you today?” (use puppets or cards)
- **Warm-Up:** Monkey jumps, sloth crawls, jungle vines swing
- **Main Poses:** Lion (roar), Cobra, Frog, Tree, Elephant
- **Partner Pose:** Giraffe necks (gentle backbends)
- **Breathwork:** Snake breath (long, hissing exhale)
- **Relaxation:** Lie down for a “jungle nap” with soft drum sounds
- **Closing:** Jungle chant – “Peace like a river in the jungle!”

Top Tips:

- Use props like animal toys, scarves, visual cards
- Keep language clear, playful, and simple

- Celebrate every small participation!

Ages 6–8: The Curious Creators



This group is full of energy, imagination, and a desire to **learn through doing**. They love a storyline, a role to play, and enjoy being helpers. Keep sessions 35–40 minutes and include opportunities for choice and leadership.

Your goals:

- Channel energy into creative play and movement
- Teach basic yoga shapes and simple sequences
- Foster kindness and group connection

Sample Themes:

- Superheroes & Strength
- Kindness Quest
- The Enchanted Forest
- Heart of the Ocean
- Fire & Water
- Brave Like a Dragon
- Balloon Adventures
- Gratitude Garden

- Yoga Detectives
- Friendship Flow

Kindness Quest (Example Plan):

- **Opening Circle:** “What kind thing did you do today?”
- **Warm-Up:** Wiggle hearts, jumping jacks of joy
- **Main Poses:** Tree (balance), Warrior 2 (strength), Star, Camel (open heart)
- **Partner Pose:** Helping Bridge (assisted backbend or table)
- **Breathwork:** Rainbow arms (inhale arms up, exhale them down in arcs)
- **Mindfulness:** Hold a “kindness stone” and think of someone special
- **Relaxation:** Story: “Sending kindness across the world”
- **Closing:** Group mantra – “I am kind, I am strong, I belong”

Top Tips:

- Use repetition with small variations
- Let children lead a pose or chant
- Encourage teamwork with group games



Ages 9–11: The Grounded Dreamers

These children are developing deeper self-awareness and a desire for meaning. They enjoy **learning real facts**, talking about feelings, and exploring inner qualities. Classes can be 40–50 minutes.

Your goals:

- Help them connect inner world with physical practice
- Encourage thoughtful reflection and emotional literacy
- Build strength, focus, and balance

Sample Themes:

- What Makes Me Strong
- My Inner Superpower
- Chakras for Kids
- Yoga Around the World
- Emotions & Elements
- The Hero's Journey
- Gratitude Flow
- Yoga & Nature
- Body Positivity
- Mind & Mood

My Inner Superpower (Example Plan):

- **Opening Circle:** “What’s your real-life superpower?”
- **Warm-Up:** Power stances, shake-it-out flow
- **Main Sequence:** Warrior series, Boat, Tree, Eagle
- **Partner Pose:** Trust balance (back-to-back standing)
- **Breathwork:** “Power breath” – strong inhale, sharp “HA” exhale
- **Mindfulness:** Visualise using your gift to help someone
- **Relaxation:** Star pose with an affirmation card
- **Closing:** “I am... brave, strong, kind, calm...” (group fill-in)

Top Tips:

- Use reflective journaling or drawing

- Include discussion around emotions and values
 - Make it meaningful and not too 'childish'
-



Ages 12–14: The Expanding Selves

Pre-teens and teens are craving **authenticity, autonomy, and emotional depth**. They're navigating complex social and personal changes, and benefit deeply from safe, non-judgmental spaces. Class length: 45–60 minutes.

Your goals:

- Foster self-trust and self-regulation
- Offer tools for stress, self-awareness, and resilience
- Respect autonomy and invite self-led exploration

Sample Themes:

- Dealing with Stress
- Balance & Boundaries
- Finding My Voice
- Growing Through Change
- Yoga for Exams
- Inner Strength Flow
- Self-Compassion
- Friendship & Trust

- Body Image & Self-Worth
- Moon Cycles & Emotions

Dealing with Stress (Example Plan):

- **Opening Reflection:** Journal – “What does stress feel like in my body?”
- **Warm-Up:** Shoulder rolls, shaking, tension-release moves
- **Main Sequence:** Cat-Cow, Down Dog, Forward Fold, Low Lunge, Twist, Legs-Up-the-Wall
- **Partner Practice:** Back-to-back seated breath
- **Breathwork:** Square breathing (trace fingers while breathing in 4s)
- **Mindfulness:** Body scan with calming affirmations
- **Relaxation:** Safe place visualisation
- **Closing:** Optional share or gratitude moment

Top Tips:

- Offer choice in participation and journaling
- Avoid patronising language or childish themes
- Let them be the co-creators of their experience

Adapting for Inclusion & Accessibility

Always be ready to *read the room* and adjust:

- **Use fewer poses, more repetition**
 - **Offer visuals and props** to support understanding
 - **Allow movement breaks or observing**
 - **Give permission to opt out** or adapt any pose
 - **Avoid sensory overload**—lower volume, dim lights, offer noise-cancelling headphones
 - **Involve carers or support staff** where helpful
 - **Use gentle language and affirm autonomy** at every step
-

Inclusion Check-In for Every Plan

Before teaching, pause and reflect:

- Is there an option to sit, stand, or lie down?
- Are props optional rather than expected?
- Is observing without pressure welcomed?
- Is language clear, concrete, and invitational?
- Is rest offered as a choice, not a reward?

If the answer is mostly “yes,” your plan is likely inclusive and supportive.

After-Class Reflection: Learning From Real Experience

After teaching, take a few minutes to reflect:

- What moments felt connecting or regulating?
- Where did the group need something different than planned?
- How did my own nervous system respond during the class?
- What will I keep, adapt, or release next time?

Reflection is how experience becomes wisdom.



Reflection & Discussion Prompts

- Which age group do you feel most drawn to—and why?
- What themes light you up or feel closest to your teaching values?
- How can you create an experience that blends **movement, stillness, play, connection, and self-expression**?

- What part of planning feels most supportive for you — and what feels most stressful?
How can lesson planning become a grounding practice rather than a pressure?

“Children learn best when they feel seen, safe, and celebrated.”

– Deb Dana

Once you feel confident planning flexible, inclusive classes, the next step is learning how to adapt those plans across different environments. In the following section, we explore how kids yoga changes shape in schools, nurseries, studios, and community spaces.



7. Teaching Kids Yoga in Different Settings

Creating calm, connection, and creativity—wherever you are

Yoga for children isn't limited to a mat or a studio. It's a flexible, imaginative, embodied experience that can flourish in school halls, nurseries, libraries, church rooms, community spaces, and living rooms alike. Each environment comes with its own energy, logistics, and opportunities—and the magic happens when we meet the moment, rather than resist it.

Same Heart, Different Container

The heart of kids yoga stays the same wherever you teach — **safety, connection, play, and regulation** — but the *container* changes.

Rather than asking, “*How do I make this setting perfect?*”, try asking:

“What does this environment need in order to feel supportive?”

Different settings don't require different values — they require **flexibility, simplicity, and attunement**.

“A flexible teacher creates safe space wherever they are—not by controlling the environment, but by meeting children with presence, creativity, and care.”

– Inspired by Lisa Flynn

Teaching in Schools (Mainstream)

Key Features:

- Often in multipurpose spaces (e.g. classrooms, halls)
- Tight timeframes (20–40 mins max)
- Mixed-ability, large groups
- Curriculum and behaviour-focused

Top Tips:

- Build routines: start with the same song or breath each week
- Use props sparingly—space and time are limited
- Link yoga themes to the curriculum (e.g. science = weather, PSHE = emotions)
- Create rhythm: short sequences, brain breaks, breath cues
- Encourage class teacher engagement—they're often your best advocate!

Working With Teachers & School Staff

Class teachers and support staff can be powerful allies.

Helpful practices include:

- Clarifying roles before the session (who manages behaviour, transitions, exits)
- Inviting staff to participate where appropriate
- Using shared language (e.g. *regulation, focus, calm bodies*)
- Briefly explaining the purpose of yoga tools (“This helps children settle before learning.”)

A regulated adult team creates a regulated class.

Mini Theme Idea: “Focus & Calm”

- **Setting:** Library, classroom corner, or wet play
 - **Poses:** Chair cat-cow, seated twist, forward fold
 - **Breath:** Finger tracing + square breath
 - **Mindfulness:** “Noticing 5 things” sensory practice
 - **Time:** 20-minute golden-time mini session
-

Teaching in Nurseries & Preschools

Key Features:

- High adult-to-child ratios
- Children aged 2–4 years with limited verbal skills
- Sensory-rich, noisy environments
- Learning through play and imitation

Top Tips:

- Use songs, animal noises, and props
- Move frequently—avoid static stillness
- Keep sessions short (15–25 mins)
- Pair movement with sound and gesture
- Link to their daily rhythms (e.g., pre-lunch calm)

Mini Theme Idea: “Teddy Bear Yoga”

- Use soft toys, a picnic blanket, and “nap time” breathing
- Pair poses with a story (e.g. bear crawl, tree, butterfly, sleeping mouse)
- End with a quiet cuddle pose or lullaby

Heart Space Bonus Tip: Encourage nursery staff to join in—children model their reactions!

Teaching in SEN / Neurodivergent Settings

Key Features:

- Often 1:1 or very small group sessions
- Huge variety in communication, sensory, and movement needs
- High value placed on routine, calm, and clear cues

Top Tips:

- Use **visual aids**: picture cards, now-next boards, emotion scales
- Keep the sequence predictable with gentle transitions
- Allow space for **watching before joining**
- Offer **weighted objects**, fidget items, or body awareness tools
- Focus on **co-regulation** over “correct” poses

The Three-Rule Approach

When working in SEN or neurodivergent settings, simplicity is powerful.

Return to these three guiding principles:

1. **Predictable rhythm** — familiar openings, middles, and endings
2. **Clear, concrete language** — short phrases and visual cues
3. **Co-regulation over correction** — your calm leads the way

If things feel overwhelming, reduce input before adding more.

Mini Theme Idea: “My Calm Bubble”

- 3 simple poses: star, forward fold, child’s pose
- Feather or scarf breathing
- “Bubble visualisation” to support sensory safety

- End with a “bubble blanket” relaxation using weighted beanbags or fabric

“Inclusion is not about fitting children into yoga. It’s about making yoga fit the child.”

– Sonia Sumar

Teaching in Community Centres & Studios

Key Features:

- Variable group sizes and ages
- Drop-ins and irregular attendance
- Sometimes shared spaces, background noise, or other events nearby

Top Tips:

- Use a **familiar flow** each week (opening circle, poses, breath, rest)
- Provide home-link tools: yoga cards, affirmations, colouring sheets
- Be welcoming of siblings, noise, movement, and imperfection
- Create community—use **group mantras**, collaborative crafts, or family yoga invites

Navigating Parents With Kindness & Clarity

Parents often watch because they care — but boundaries are still important.

Supportive approaches include:

- Setting expectations at the start (“You’re welcome to observe quietly or join in.”)
- Redirecting gently if a parent interrupts (“I’ll guide the group — thank you.”)
- Being clear about touch, consent, and independence
- Communicating concerns with caregivers *after* class, not during

Clear boundaries help everyone relax.

Mini Theme Idea: “Feelings & Poses” 6-Week Block

- Weekly emotions: Joy (star pose), Anger (lion breath), Sadness (child’s pose), Calm (tree), Bravery (warrior), Love (camel)
 - Include reflection cards and a mini “feelings book” they add to weekly
-



Teaching Family Yoga

Key Features:

- All ages—toddlers to grandparents!
- Emphasis on bonding, laughter, and non-competitive play
- Adults may feel shy or unsure about participation

Top Tips:

- Begin with **connection games** (eye gazing, hand squeezes)
- Use **group and partner poses** to build trust
- Blend **adult-appropriate movement** with childlike fun
- Don't expect total stillness—wiggles and giggles are part of it!
- Encourage closing rituals like shared breathing or gratitude hugs

Family Yoga: Letting Go of “Perfect”

Family yoga is messy, loud, joyful, and deeply connective.

Remember:

- Children may act differently with caregivers present
- Adults may feel self-conscious or hesitant
- Laughter and chaos are not signs of failure

Your role is to invite connection — not control the experience.

When families feel welcomed exactly as they are, the yoga lands.

Mini Theme Idea: “Love & Laughter” (Valentine’s Class)

- Heart-themed partner poses (e.g., love bridge, hug tree)
 - Games like “mirror me” or “statue freeze”
 - Breathwork: “Sending love bubbles”
 - Finish with snuggle relaxation, optional chocolate heart, and photo prop
-

Setting Adaptation Workshop

Practical Activity:

1. Choose a class theme (e.g. “Magic Carpet Adventure”)
2. Pick two different settings (e.g. nursery vs school)
3. Discuss how you would adapt:
 - Pacing
 - Language
 - Props & Materials
 - Structure & Transitions
 - Sensory Considerations

Encourage trainees to present their plans with creativity and flexibility.

Confidence Comes From Experience

Feeling unsure in a new setting is normal. Confidence grows through:

- Teaching regularly in one setting before expanding
- Reflecting after each session
- Asking for feedback from staff or caregivers
- Trusting your instincts and values

You do not need to master every environment at once. Let your teaching evolve naturally.



Reflection & Discussion Prompts

- What setting am I most naturally drawn to—and why?
- Which setting do I find most daunting?
- What strategies, resources, or supports would help me feel more confident there?
- How can I bring *Heart Space values* of calm, care, creativity, and inclusion into each environment?
- Which teaching environment feels most aligned for you right now?
- What support or preparation would help you feel more confident in a new setting?

“When yoga meets children where they are—in their classroom, their play space, or their own family—it becomes more than movement. It becomes a way of being.”

– Heart Space Yoga

As we move between different environments, one thing remains constant: our responsibility to hold clear, ethical, and safe boundaries. In the next section, we explore safeguarding, ethics, and professional responsibility in children’s yoga.



8. Ethics, Safeguarding & Boundaries

Holding space with care, clarity, and compassion

Teaching yoga to children is a beautiful privilege—but also a profound responsibility. We’re not just guiding movement or breath. We’re creating containers of safety, connection, and growth. Our ethics, boundaries, and safeguarding practices form the backbone of everything we do.

Ethics Begin With Relationship

Ethics in kids yoga are not just about policies and procedures — they live in the *everyday moments* of how we speak, listen, respond, and repair.

At Heart Space Yoga, ethical teaching means:

- Acting with integrity, even when no one is watching
- Prioritising the child’s wellbeing over our ego or expectations
- Staying within our scope and training
- Asking for support when something feels beyond us

Ethics are not about being perfect. They are about being **trustworthy, reflective, and human**.

“When we hold space for children, we must become the safest person in the room—not the most entertaining, the most flexible, or the most experienced—but the most trustworthy.”
– Heart Space Yoga

Your Role as a Children’s Yoga Teacher

You are **not** a therapist, a social worker, or a substitute parent. But you are a powerful adult presence—and that matters more than you may ever know.

You are:

- A **facilitator** of movement, breath, play, and self-regulation
- A **safe adult** offering attuned, respectful connection
- A **guide**, not a guru—your authority comes from your humility, not your perfection

Your responsibilities include:

- Creating emotionally and physically safe spaces
- Teaching within your scope and training
- Communicating clearly and professionally with caregivers and staff

- Embodying empathy, inclusion, and clear boundaries

“Ethics is not about rules—it’s about relationships.”

– Lisa Miller

Safeguarding Responsibilities

Safeguarding is not just a legal obligation—it’s a relational one. When we are trusted with children, we must become protectors of their right to feel safe, heard, and respected.

Minimum Requirements:

- Enhanced **Access NI** check (UK) or equivalent police vetting
- Up-to-date **Safeguarding Children** training (Level 1 minimum) Recommended but not essential
- **Paediatric First Aid** (especially for under-8s or family yoga) Recommended but not essential
- **Public liability insurance** (check it covers children’s classes)
- **Consent forms**, medical info & emergency contacts
- An **incident reporting** process (logbook or secure form)

If a child discloses something:

- Stay calm and grounded
- Reassure them: “You’re doing the right thing by telling me.”
- **Do not promise secrecy**—explain that you may need to speak to someone who can help
- Write down the disclosure **verbatim**, with the date and time
- Report as per your local safeguarding policy (or to your designated safeguarding lead, if working in a setting)

If you're working solo (e.g. in your own studio), ensure you:

- Know your local safeguarding referral routes
- Have a basic safeguarding policy and reporting process in place
- Seek guidance from relevant agencies when in doubt

Policies & Paperwork: Keeping Everyone Safe

Clear systems protect children *and* teachers.

As a minimum, ensure you have:

- Registration and consent forms
- Emergency contact information
- Medical and additional needs information
- Photo and media permissions
- Incident and accident log
- Clear safeguarding reporting pathway
- GDPR-compliant data storage

Having these in place allows you to focus on teaching with confidence and presence.

Boundaries Are Love

Boundaries are not about control. They are loving, respectful lines that keep everyone emotionally and physically safe.

Physical Boundaries

- Ask permission before any physical contact
- Use props (e.g. teddy or doll) to demonstrate assists
- Avoid tickling, lap-sitting, or surprise touch—even if the child seems to enjoy it

Emotional Boundaries

- Stay neutral and regulated during behavioural challenges
- Avoid offloading your own struggles or seeking validation from children
- Do not diagnose or label children—refer to trained professionals when needed

Relational Boundaries

- Keep communication professional—engage with caregivers, not the child directly outside class
- Maintain professional distance on social media—no private messaging or friend requests
- Resist over-identifying or becoming “the favourite”—every child deserves equal presence

“Boundaries are the distance at which I can love you and me simultaneously.”

– Prentis Hemphill

Emotional Boundaries & After-Class Care

Teaching children — especially those with big feelings — can be emotionally demanding.

Healthy boundaries include:

- Not taking children’s stories home alone
- Debriefing with a trusted peer or supervisor when needed
- Creating a short ritual to “close” a class energetically
- Recognising when you need rest, support, or time off

Caring for yourself is not selfish — it is an ethical responsibility.

Yoga Teacher Ethics

We root our ethical code in yogic philosophy—especially the **Yamas & Niyamas**, the moral compass of yoga.



1. **Ahimsa** (Non-Harming):
Kindness first. Create trauma-aware spaces. Never shame, pressure, or coerce.
2. **Satya** (Truthfulness):
Be transparent about your qualifications, scope, and the intentions of your work.
3. **Asteya** (Non-Stealing):
Respect other teachers’ creations—credit sources and honour intellectual property.

4. **Brahmacharya** (Wise Use of Energy):
Teach sustainably. You don't have to hold it all. Know your limits.
5. **Aparigraha** (Non-Grasping):
Let go of perfection. A noisy class, a meltdown, a disrupted plan—it's all okay.
Presence matters more than polish.

“Ethics in yoga is about how we live and relate to others, not just how we move on the mat.”
– Deborah Adele

The Yamas & Niyamas as a Living Practice

The ethical foundations of yoga offer gentle guidance for our work with children:

- **Ahimsa (Non-Harming)**: Choosing language, pacing, and practices that protect emotional safety
- **Satya (Truthfulness)**: Being honest about our role, limits, and intentions
- **Asteya (Non-Stealing)**: Respecting children's time, energy, and consent
- **Brahmacharya (Wise Use of Energy)**: Teaching sustainably and avoiding burnout
- **Aparigraha (Non-Grasping)**: Letting go of perfection, outcomes, or needing to be “liked”

These principles are not rules — they are anchors we return to when navigating complexity.



Reflection & Discussion Prompts

Encourage trainees to journal on the following:

- What are **my personal boundaries** as a teacher? How do I uphold them?
- How do I react when a child's behaviour disrupts my plan?
- What helps me feel **safe, regulated, and clear** in my role?
- When I don't know what to do... what's my next step?

- What boundaries help *you* feel safe and grounded as a teacher?
 - When something feels uncomfortable or unclear, what support systems can you turn to?
-

Confidence Comes From Knowing Your Next Step

You don't need to know *everything*. You only need to know:

- When to pause
- When to seek guidance
- Who to report to
- How to document and follow up

Uncertainty does not mean you are unsafe or unqualified. It means you are **aware and responsible**.

Activity: Real-Life Scenarios

In pairs or small groups, explore the following:

Scenario 1:

A child clings to you after class and doesn't want to leave.

→ What's your boundary? What's your compassion response?

Scenario 2:

A parent shares that their child is struggling with anxiety and asks you to "watch out for them."

→ What is and isn't your role here?

Scenario 3:

A child whispers something concerning during Savasana.

→ How do you respond in the moment? What next?

Scenario 4:

A neurodivergent child is hiding under a chair mid-class.

→ How do you meet them with safety and inclusion?

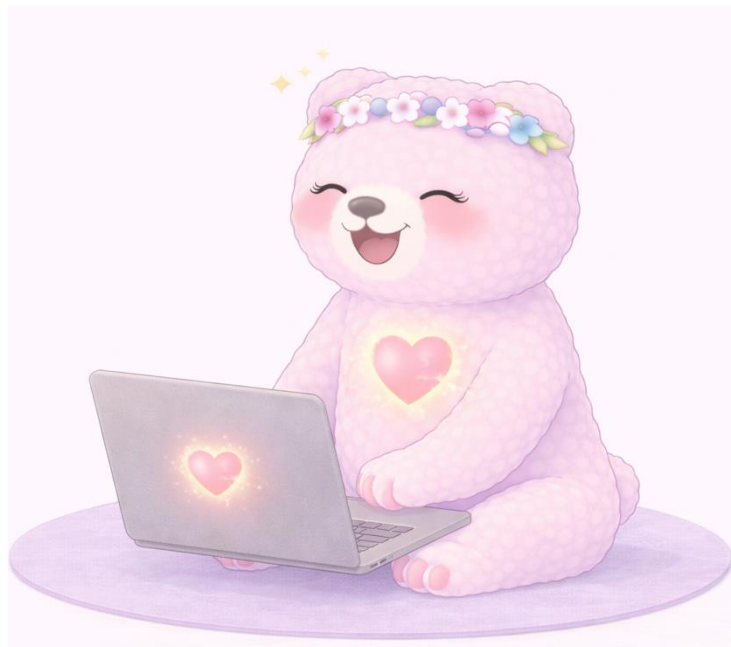
Scenario 5:

You feel emotionally overwhelmed after a high-energy class with multiple behavioural challenges.

→ What's your self-care? How do you debrief or get support?

These scenarios are invitations to **reflect, not perfect**. Encourage open conversation and mutual learning.

When ethics and boundaries are clear, our work can grow in a way that feels sustainable and aligned. In the next section, we explore how to share children's yoga with the world — through business, marketing, and offerings rooted in integrity.



9. Business & Marketing Toolkit

Bringing your vision to life—with purpose, presence, and playful professionalism

Sharing children's yoga is a joyful calling—but it also deserves to be a **sustainable business**. This section supports you to clarify your offerings, price with confidence, market from the heart, and grow your teaching into something that truly nourishes both your students **and** you.

A Heart Space Approach to Business

At Heart Space Yoga, business is not about hustling, pushing, or performing. It is about **sharing something meaningful in a way that is sustainable, ethical, and aligned.**

You are allowed to:

- Earn well from heart-centred work
- Grow slowly and intentionally
- Change direction as you learn
- Build a business that fits your life — not the other way around

Business is simply the structure that allows your work to continue.

“Marketing is simply sharing what you love in a way that helps others feel invited.”
— Heart Space Yoga

Get Clear on Your Offer

Before we talk pricing, branding, or marketing—pause and tune in. Clarity is power.

Ask yourself:

- **Who do I feel most called to support?**
(Preschoolers with big feelings? Tweens struggling with anxiety? Sensory-seeking neurodivergent kids? Families who crave connection?)
- **What do I want my classes to feel like?**
(Joyful? Calming? Empowering? Whimsical? Grounding?)
- **What values drive my work?**
(Inclusion, creativity, co-regulation, compassion, agency, fun...)
- **Where do I want to teach?**
(Church halls? Schools? Studios? Community spaces? Outdoors?)

You don’t need to do it all. Start with what **feels aligned**, not just what feels possible.

You Don’t Have to Do Everything

One of the biggest causes of burnout for kids yoga teachers is trying to offer *too much, too soon*.

Instead of asking, “*What should I offer?*”, try:

- “What do I feel confident teaching right now?”
- “Which age group lights me up?”

- “Which setting feels most supportive for me?”

Start with **one clear offering**. Depth builds confidence faster than variety.

Common Core Offerings:

- Themed **weekly classes** (ages 4–7, 8–11, SEN-specific, etc.)
- **6-week blocks** exploring a theme (e.g. “Feelings & Flow” or “Yoga & the Seasons”)
- **School wellbeing programmes**
- **Nursery yoga sessions**
- **Holiday camps** (e.g. “Mini Mindful Explorers”)
- **1:1 support** for children with additional needs
- **Family yoga pop-ups**

Let your offerings be an expression of your values—not just your schedule.

Pricing & Packages

Your time, preparation, and energy are worthy of fair exchange. Many heart-led teachers undercharge—don’t let that be you.

Sample Pricing (UK):

- **45-min group class:** £6–10 per child
- **6-week block:** £36–60
- **Nursery/school sessions:** £35–65 per session (often 30–40 minutes)
- **Private 1:1:** £30–60/hr
- **Family yoga:** £10–15 per pair (sliding scale for siblings welcome)

Tips:

- Offer **block bookings only** to ensure income
- Create a **bundle discount** (e.g. Book 2 blocks = £5 off)
- Offer **early-bird prices**, loyalty schemes, or family discounts
- Provide **taster sessions** for schools or nurseries
- Charge **based on energy, not just time** (a 45-min class can take 3 hours of prep, travel, setup, etc.)

Pricing isn't about worth—it's about **making the exchange sustainable**.

Pricing With Integrity (and Self-Respect)

Charging fairly is not unkind — it is what allows you to show up regulated, present, and resourced.

Remember:

- You are charging for **preparation, travel, setup, emotional labour, and experience** — not just minutes on a mat
- Under-charging often leads to resentment or burnout
- Sustainable pricing supports ethical teaching

A grounded teacher creates safer spaces.

Legal & Admin Essentials

To run legally and safely, you'll need:

- Public Liability Insurance (covering children's yoga)
- Enhanced Access NI Check
- Paediatric First Aid (Recommended but not essential)
- Safeguarding Children Training (Level 1 minimum- recommended but not essential)
- GDPR-compliant booking process (see Section 8)
- Class **Terms & Conditions** (including refund/cancellation policy)
- Registration/consent forms, emergency contacts, health disclosures

Optional but helpful:

- Business email
- Booking system (e.g. BookWhen, Calendly, Acuity)
- Income tracker or simple accounting spreadsheet

Get these foundations in place **before** your first class—it saves stress later.

Marketing with Soul

You do **not** have to be flashy, loud, or overly polished. You just need to be **real, visible, and consistent**.

Where to show up:

- **Instagram** (visual storytelling)
- **Facebook** (especially personal page and local groups)
- Flyers/posters in **cafés, schools, libraries**
- **Email list** (start early—even 10 subscribers matters)
- Your own **website** or a simple landing page
- Local parenting WhatsApp or FB groups
- **Free school demos** or open days

How to show up:

- Share *stories*, not just promotions (e.g. “Today in class, a 6-year-old said...”)
- Use language that reflects what parents are Googling:
“*Calm down tools*”, “*help with bedtime*”, “*mindful movement for anxious kids*”
- Be brave—show your face and speak from the heart
- Offer **free value**: downloads, breath posters, bedtime scripts
- Ask for and share **testimonials**

The more people feel your heart, the more they’ll trust your work.

Words Parents Actually Respond To

Parents don’t usually search for “yoga philosophy.” They search for support.

Helpful, heart-centred language includes:

- “Tools for big feelings”
- “Support with anxiety and overwhelm”
- “Gentle movement for confidence”
- “Calm routines for busy minds”
- “Sensory-friendly and inclusive”
- “Helping children feel safe in their bodies”

When you speak to real needs, your work naturally finds the people it’s meant for.

Branding That Reflects You

Your brand doesn't need to be fancy—it needs to be **authentic**.

Ask yourself:

- What colours, fonts, and visuals feel like *me*?
- Do I want to evoke **calm, joy, magic, or connection**?
- What makes my approach **different or special**?

Assets to create:

- A simple **logo** (Canva is your friend!)
- Canva-made **Instagram templates** for consistency
- **Class flyer** (one-page PDF or printable)
- A **short bio** and a friendly headshot
- A few **brand keywords** (e.g. magical, warm, sensory-friendly, joyful, grounded)

People don't just book the class. They book the *feeling* you bring.

You Are the Brand

In children's yoga, parents aren't just booking a class — they're trusting *you*.

Your warmth, consistency, and values matter more than:

- Perfect graphics
- Trendy wording
- Constant posting

Let your voice sound like *you*. Authentic connection builds trust far faster than polished performance.

Growing with Integrity

Take your time. Let your business grow like a garden—not a sprint.

Growth ideas:

- **Seasonal specials** (Halloween, Christmas calm-down, exam support)
- **Partner with local therapists**, SEN support groups, or creatives
- Run **free tasters** or collaborations with children's cafés, libraries, or craft spaces
- Create a **referral network** with likeminded practitioners

- Add **resources**: bedtime meditations, yoga games, printable affirmation cards

Protect your energy:

- You don't need to do it all at once
- You don't need to compete
- You can say no

You are not a machine. You are a lighthouse. Shine wisely.

Sustainable Growth & Burnout Prevention

Heart-led teachers are often generous to a fault. Protecting your energy is part of professional responsibility.

Consider:

- Capping class numbers
- Scheduling rest weeks between blocks
- Teaching in one setting before expanding
- Saying no to misaligned opportunities
- Reviewing your workload regularly

A business that honours your nervous system will last far longer than one built on over-giving.



Reflection & Action Planning

- What 2–3 **offerings** would I LOVE to launch in the next 3–6 months?
- What **resources or support** do I need to make them happen?
- What **systems** will help me feel calm and organised?

- What **limiting belief** do I need to release to share my work more fully?
 - What would a *sustainable* version of this work look like for you?
 - What belief about money, visibility, or confidence are you ready to gently release?
-

When your work is rooted in clarity, ethics, and sustainability, it becomes something you can grow with — not grow out of. In the final section, we explore certification, integration, and how to carry this work forward with confidence.



10. Certification & Next Steps

Completing this Kids Yoga Teacher Training is so much more than a certificate—it's a heartfelt step into the world of nurturing calm, connection, and confidence in children. You're not just "finished"... you're beginning. Whether you step into schools, studios, living rooms, or forests—your presence matters. And you are ready.

Integration, Not Perfection

Completing this training does not mean you suddenly know everything. It means you have the foundations, awareness, and heart to keep learning *with* the children you serve.

At Heart Space Yoga, we honour:

- Growth over mastery
- Curiosity over certainty
- Presence over performance

You are not expected to be a “perfect” kids yoga teacher. You are invited to be a **real, regulated, reflective one**.

“Teaching yoga to children is not about perfect poses—it’s about being a steady, loving presence in a child’s day.”

— Lisa Flynn, *Yoga for Children*

Stepping Into the Role With Confidence

It’s normal to feel excitement, nerves, and self-doubt all at once as you complete your training.

Remember:

- Confidence comes from practice, not certificates
- Every experienced teacher once taught their very first class
- You are allowed to grow into this work at your own pace

You don’t need to have everything figured out to begin.

Certification Criteria

To become a certified **Heart Space Kids Yoga Teacher** and receive your accreditation through **Yoga Alliance Professionals**, you must:

- Attend all live contact training days (in person or online)
- Submit **three age-appropriate class plans** (including themes, sequencing, and adaptations)
- Complete and submit your **reflective journal** (see prompts below)
- Teach one **observed class** (30–45 mins, recorded or live, with written reflection)
- Demonstrate understanding of **child development, inclusive teaching, and safe practice**

Once reviewed, your certification will be issued and you’ll be eligible to register with YAP.

Practice Teaching: What We’re Really Looking For

When reviewing your observed class or recording, we are not assessing perfection.

We are looking for:

- Clear, age-appropriate language
- Inclusion and choice
- A supportive class rhythm
- Awareness of safety and boundaries
- Attunement to the children in front of you
- Reflection and willingness to adapt

Your presence matters more than polish.

Reflective Journal Prompts (To Submit)

Let this be a soulful integration of all you've explored—on the mat, in your heart, and in your imagination.

1. What has shifted in your understanding of children's yoga since beginning this course?
2. What age group do you feel most called to serve, and why?
3. What are your personal values or intentions as a children's yoga teacher?
4. What aspects of the training challenged or surprised you?
5. What practices will support *you* as you hold space for others?

You are welcome to include art, poetry, collage, or visual representations of your journey alongside your writing.

"We teach best what we most need to learn."

— *Richard Bach*

Reflection as a Living Practice

Reflection is not a one-time requirement — it's a companion for your teaching journey.

You may find it helpful to:

- Journal after classes
- Note moments of connection or challenge
- Reflect on how your nervous system felt
- Track your growth over time

This reflective awareness will continue to deepen your teaching long after the training ends.

Registering with Yoga Pro's

Once certified, you'll be eligible to register as a **Children's Yoga Teacher** with Yoga Pro's. You'll receive a direct link and guidance from me when ready.

You'll need:

- Your Heart Space Yoga certification
- Proof of children's yoga insurance

Benefits of Yoga Pro's registration include:

- CPD events and continued learning
- A searchable online directory
- Professional community and support
- Use of their accredited logo on your materials

You Are Not Meant to Do This Alone

Teaching can sometimes feel isolating — especially when working independently.

Connection supports confidence. Consider:

- Staying connected with fellow trainees
- Joining peer reflection circles or CPD days
- Seeking mentorship or supervision when needed
- Continuing to learn through workshops and courses

Community is part of ethical, sustainable teaching.

Continuing the Journey

This is only the beginning. Your teaching path will unfold in its own rhythm—guided by curiosity, care, and community.

Here are some ways to continue growing:

- **Further CPD:** Mindfulness for Kids, Neurodiversity-Affirming Practices, Somatic Storytelling
- **Deepen Your Learning:** Explore your reading list and follow inspiring voices like Lisa Flynn, Carla Tantillo Philibert, Dan Siegel, Louise Goldberg, and others

- **Mentorship:** Keep in touch with your trainer or find local peers to co-create, reflect, and stay encouraged
- **Build Your Offering:** Revisit your *Business Starter Pack* and plan your first classes, school partnerships, or family workshops

“Each child who steps onto their mat is opening a door to self-discovery.
And so are you.”
— *Heart Space Yoga*

Carrying the Heart Space Way Forward

As you step into your work, remember what makes this training unique:

- You centre safety before stillness
- You offer choice before compliance
- You see behaviour as communication
- You teach with heart, humility, and humanity

These values will guide you far more reliably than any script or sequence.

Final Words

This training is not an ending—it’s an initiation.

A new chapter of your teaching, creativity, and service begins now. You are stepping into the role of *guide, anchor, encourager, and light-bringer*. Your tools? A mat. A breath. A story. A song. And a heart that listens.

Please know this: **You do not need to be perfect to be powerful.**

The most meaningful moments in children’s yoga are often quiet, silly, messy, or unexpected. Stay open to them all. You are *already* making a difference by showing up with love.

You are a keeper of the magic.

A gentle leader in a wild world.

A mirror of calm, care, and possibility.

Thank you for choosing this path. Thank you for saying yes.

Whatever path you take next — teaching weekly classes, offering pop-ups, working in schools, or simply sharing yoga with the children in your life — trust that this work matters.

Every moment of presence, every breath shared, every story told, every child who feels a little safer in their body because of you — it all counts.

You don't need to change the world.

You are changing *a child's world* — one class, one breath, one moment at a time.

With all my love and deepest respect,

♥ Sophie, Heart Space Yoga
